

THE INFLUENCE OF PREMARITAL COHABITATION WITH  
FUTURE SPOUSE ON SUBSEQUENT MARITAL QUALITY

BY

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THE INFLUENCE OF PREMARITAL COHABITATION WITH  
FUTURE SPOUSE ON SUBSEQUENT MARITAL QUALITY

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This study explores factors which affect the likelihood of cohabiting with the future spouse prior to marriage and examines the influence of such premarital cohabitation upon subsequent marital interaction and marital quality. The sample consists of married couples who applied for marriage licenses in Alachua County, Florida, between October of 1978 and October of 1979. Data were gathered by questionnaire from husbands and wives in 309 marriages. Respondents were, by and large, young, highly-educated, and white-collar, with the majority having entered their first marriages. Most



couples, fully 70 percent according to the wives data, had lived together for at least some period of time before marriage.

When individual husbands and wives were employed as the units of analysis, both frequency of church attendance and sex-role traditionalism were negatively correlated with the likelihood of cohabiting. For wives, only, listing a religious preference of "none" was negatively correlated with cohabitation and having been married at least once before was positively related to cohabitation.

When couples were employed as the units of analysis, only certain combinations of husbands' and wives' values on the independent variables had significant effects on the likelihood of cohabitation. Couples were significantly less likely to have lived together before marriage only when both husband and wife were frequent churchgoers and only when both husband and wife were traditional in their attitudes regarding sex roles. Couples among whom either or both partners listed a religious preference of "none" were significantly more likely to have cohabited than those among whom both listed a preference for a specific religion. Having been married at least once before is only associated with cohabitation among couples in which the wife has been married before but the husband has not.

No differences emerged between cohabitators and noncohabitators in the areas of perceived communication quality and mode of decision making. However, cohabitators were found to

score significantly lower than noncohabitators on the dyadic adjustment scale. This effect remained even after controlling for differences between the two groups on such dimensions as religiosity and sex-role traditionalism.

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The decades of the 1960's and 1970's saw dramatic changes in marriage and family patterns in the United States. Divorce increased at a rapid rate. The ratio of divorced persons to the number of married persons with spouse present rose from 35 per 1,000 in 1960 to 47 per 1,000 in 1970, and then more than doubled to 100 per 1,000 in 1980. Thus, for every 10 persons in 1980 who were in intact marriages, there was 1 person who was divorced and had not remarried (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981: 2). The women's movement effectively challenged many traditional assumptions about women's roles in the family. More and more women sought employment outside the home, either electing to have fewer children or postponing childbirth indefinitely. The gay rights movement pressed for greater freedom in choice of sexual partner, and "swinging," the exchanging of marital partners for sexual activities, became a popular pastime among a minority of American couples. Singlehood as a lifestyle became increasingly popular among young, marriage-age people.

### The Rise in Unmarried Cohabitation

Living together outside of marriage, unmarried cohabitation, has increased dramatically over the last ten years

or so. It has occurred not only among young, college-age couples, but also among a significant proportion of couples over the age of 35 (Glick and Spanier, 1980: 22). According to the most recent census estimates, approximately 1,560,000 unmarried couples are currently living together in the United States, three times the number in 1970 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981: 4). In all likelihood this figure underestimates the extent of this behavior because many couples who live together are probably reluctant to admit this fact to census takers (Yllo, 1978: 41). Even the most recent statistics fail to address the issue of how many people experience unmarried cohabitation at some point in their adult lives. Certainly many more than 1 or 2 percent of the population have done so. However, no reliable estimates of lifetime incidence of cohabitation are available.

#### Prior Research

Unmarried cohabitation has received considerable attention from social scientists in recent years (see, for example, Lyness et al., 1972; Macklin, 1972; Henze and Hudson, 1974; Peterman et al., 1974; Bower and Christopherson, 1977; Clayton and Voss, 1977; Lewis et al., 1977; Stafford et al., 1977; Lyness, 1978; Yllo, 1978; Jacques and Chason, 1979; Newcomb, 1979; Glick and Spanier, 1980; Newcomb and Bentler, 1980). Research on the subject, to date, has been largely descriptive, documenting the kinds of people most likely to enter cohabiting relationships (Peterman et al., 1974; Clayton and Voss, 1977; Newcomb and Bentler, 1980),

describing the nature of these relationships as compared with going-together couples and married couples (Lyness et al., 1972; Lewis et al., 1977; Stafford et al., 1977; Newcomb and Bentler, 1980), or providing estimates of the proportion of couples engaging in this practice at any one time (Clayton and Voss, 1977; Glick and Norton, 1977; Yllo, 1978; Glick and Spanier, 1980).

Research has not yet, however, addressed the question of the effects, if any, that living together with the future spouse has on subsequent marital adjustment. This question is significant because many couples view cohabitation as a test for compatibility, offering some protection against entering a "bad" marriage (Lewis et al., 1977: 371). Whether or not premarital cohabitation indeed serves this function is, as yet, unresolved. Almost no data have been brought to bear upon the question.

#### Plan of the Present Study

The present work attempts to clarify the issue of whether premarital cohabitation with the future spouse has a measurable effect on subsequent marital success. In particular, this study addresses three interrelated questions regarding cohabitation prior to marriage:

1. What sociodemographic and attitudinal characteristics differentiate couples who have cohabited with their spouses prior to marriage from those who have not?
2. What qualitative differences emerge in marital patterns between prior cohabitators and noncohabitators in regard to decision making and the ability to communicate with each other, controlling for relevant sociodemographic variables such as age, education, social class, marital history, and religiosity?

3. What is the relationship between the extent of pre-marital cohabitation with the future spouse and perceived marital quality within the current marriage?

This study is based upon completed questionnaires from one or both members of 309 recently married couples. Of these, 210 lived together for at least some period of time before marriage, 90 did not, and 9 did not supply any data regarding cohabitation. The sample was drawn from Florida Marriage Records on file in the Alachua County Courthouse in Gainesville, Florida, in August of 1980. Data were gathered on couples married between October 6, 1978, and October 8, 1979; therefore couples were married not less than one year and not more than two years.

Two identical, fourteen-page questionnaires were sent through the mail to each husband-wife pair in the sample. In the majority of cases, returns were from both members of the pair. Therefore, unlike much family research in the past which gathered data only from wives, the present work makes possible comparisons of husbands' and wives' responses on a number of variables, such as perception of the cohabiting experience, communication and decision making in the marriage, attitudes toward sex roles, and marital satisfaction.

#### Theoretical Orientations

The widespread occurrence of unmarried cohabitation is a fairly recent development in the United States. Therefore, a coherent theory which explains how this behavior fits in with existing patterns of mate selection, courtship, and

marriage in this society awaits development. Given the paucity of theory in this area, the author has been guided by alternative theoretical orientations with regard to the way in which cohabitation is perceived by the persons involved, and the manner in which premarital cohabitation would be most likely to influence subsequent marital quality.

#### The Motivation to Cohabit

Sociologists have described a number of types of cohabiting relationships, based upon the cohabitants' stated (or inferred) motivations for living together. Cohabitation has been variously described as a temporary involvement, a preparation for marriage, a substitute for marriage, a vehicle for achieving emotional security, or an arena in which to develop relational skills (Lewis et al., 1977; Ridley et al., 1978). Because the vast majority of men and women in this country eventually marry (Glick and Norton, 1977), the author does not consider it very likely that most people are motivated to live together out of a sense that it will become a long-term substitute for marriage. It is believed, instead, that the primary motivation to live together is either (a) consciously or unconsciously to test the relationship prior to making a full commitment (in the form of marriage), in which case cohabitation can be considered an additional stage in the courtship process, or (b) to engage in a short-run alternative to marriage, in which case the increase in unmarried cohabitation can be considered a

natural consequence of the gradual erosion of traditional proscriptions against setting up housekeeping outside of marriage. This idea assumes that part of the motivation to marry for many men and women has been that it was the only opportunity to enter into a socially approved sexual and domicile-sharing relationship with their partner. It is now socially acceptable to do this without becoming necessarily committed also to marriage. Therefore, many couples simply "drift into" the cohabiting situation as a natural consequence of wanting to be together.

#### Cohabitation and Marital Success

A major hypothesis of this study is that there is a direct, linear relationship between the extent of cohabitation before marriage and subsequent marital quality. It is believed by the author that two competing explanations could account equally well for such a relationship to obtain in data taken from a cross-sectional study.

The first possibility is that cohabitation acts as a mate-selection filter which, by placing prospective spouses in a simulated marital situation, serves to select out those couples with the poorest degree of "fit" as potential marital partners. Persons, in particular, who are ill-matched on such interactional dimensions as communication and decision making would be most likely to end their relationships rather than proceed on to marriage. One would expect that if cohabitation functions in this manner, a minimum period of cohabitation would be necessary in order for couples to



find out if they are compatible. Also, the test for compatibility is more complete to the extent that the cohabiting experience approaches the totality of married living. Couples who maintain additional residences and separate bank accounts, or who include third parties in their living situation are not as likely as others to experience a true test of the marital situation.

A second and equally likely possibility is that cohabitation acts as a role-transition aid along the way to marriage in that it places couples in a simulated marital situation, but one which lacks the "finality" of the marriage commitment itself.<sup>1</sup> The cohabiting experience thereby provides an arena in which couples can develop a workable pattern of interaction without the pressure imposed by the formalized roles of husband and wife. Here, too, one would suppose a minimum duration of cohabitation to be necessary in order for this function to materialize. In fact, the longer the duration of cohabitation, the more one would expect couples to develop positive communication and decision making patterns due to repeated practice. Also, the more that marital roles are simulated in the cohabiting experience, the more effective that experience will be in developing the interactional skills necessary for the successful performance of those roles in marriage.

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<sup>1</sup>In light of current divorce law and divorce statistics, the term "finality" is very relative. Marriage constitutes a commitment which is only more "final" than that involved in the living-together situation.

### Causal Inferences from Cross-Sectional Data

There is an important point to be noted concerning the causal flow implied by the preceding discussion. It has been assumed throughout that premarital cohabitation leads to a higher level of interactional skills in marriage. This can be effected either through the filtering out as potential mates of those who are low on these skills, or by the gradual enhancing of these skills during the transitional period. However, should a positive association be found between premarital cohabitation and interactional-skills level, a cross-sectional design will not allow us to determine which of these competing explanations is more reasonable. This is due to certain limitations that arise when trying to make causal inferences about developmental processes from cross-sectional data.

The problem in this study is that it is not possible, in a cross-sectional design, to determine the interactional-skills level of couples prior to their having cohabited. Without this knowledge it cannot be determined whether (a) the interactional skills of cohabiting couples, relative to noncohabiting couples, improved during cohabitation, or (b) the interactional skills of cohabiting couples did not improve during cohabitation, but relative to noncohabiting couples, significantly fewer cohabiting couples with low interactional-skills levels progressed on to marriage.

A second problem inherent in cross-sectional data lies in the attempt to attribute a causal relationship between

measures of marital interaction and marital satisfaction. Theoretically, cohabitation can affect marital satisfaction by either selecting out couples who interact poorly or by facilitating the development of more positive forms of interaction. The quality of couple interaction, particularly in the realms of decision making and communication, may affect subsequent marital satisfaction. Thus, at least in a theoretical sense, the style and quality of communication and decision making can be seen as being causally prior to marital satisfaction.

However, it is equally reasonable to suppose that the degree of satisfaction felt by individuals toward their marriages, in turn, affects subsequent patterns of communication and decision making. Put another way, interactional patterns at time one affect marital satisfaction at time two, which, in turn, affects interactional patterns at time three, and so forth. When, as in a cross-sectional study, measures of marital interaction and marital satisfaction are all taken at the same point in time, it is not possible to specify whether communication and decision making, as measured, are causally prior to marital quality or are effects of the current level of quality in the marriage.

For this reason, no attempt will be made in this study to employ a path-analytic approach to interpret the relationships among premarital cohabitation, communication, decision making, and marital satisfaction. Instead, examination will be made of the relationship between prior

cohabitation and each measure of marital functioning separately. Also, the association between measures of marital interaction and marital satisfaction will be investigated. It would require a longitudinal study to completely untangle the causal complexity involved in all of these relationships.

## CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH

While there is a considerable amount of speculation about the effects of premarital cohabitation upon marriage (see, for example, Ridley et al., 1978; Newcomb, 1979; Macklin, 1980), very few empirical studies have addressed this problem directly. This chapter will review those few studies first. Then will follow an examination of various theoretical articles which suggest reasons for the prevalence of this practice and predict ways in which it is most likely to affect marriage and family patterns in contemporary America. Next will follow a review of the literature concerning the prevalence of unmarried cohabitation, factors related to the likelihood of cohabitation, and the nature of cohabiting relationships. The major research on marital quality and marital stability will also be briefly summarized. Finally, a model of the expected influence of premarital cohabitation upon subsequent marital quality will be presented, along with several hypotheses to be tested in this study.

### Empirical Studies

Based on a sample of 84 married students, among whom 54 had lived with someone at some time prior to marriage, Jacques and Chason concluded that premarital cohabitation did not alter, in either a positive or negative direction,

an individual's preparation for marriage (Jacques and Chason, 1979: 38). They found no differences to exist between prior cohabitators and noncohabitators on several indices of marital success, such as sexual satisfaction, relationship stability, physical intimacy, and openness of communication. However, due to the limited size and generalizability of their sample--all 84 respondents were students--and the fact that the partners of the cohabitators may not have been those whom they eventually married, the findings of their study have only limited application to the question of interest. That is, their study in no way addresses the issue of whether cohabiting with the future marriage partner improves the subsequent marriage to that partner.

Bentler and Newcomb's four-year longitudinal study of 77 couples revealed no differences in the divorce rate between couples who had lived together before marriage and those who had not (Bentler and Newcomb, 1978: 1059). While their study has more bearing on the research problem, their use of divorced/not divorced status after four years of marriage as the criterion of marital success is a gross measure of marital success which leaves out a great deal of information. For example, no data were provided on the quality of the still-intact marriages to indicate whether or not the prior-cohabiting couples among these were registering similar levels of marital satisfaction to those who had not cohabited. Still, these two studies appear to indicate, so

far, that the cohabiting experience may have little impact on marital quality or marital stability.

### Theoretical Contributions

Ridley and his associates' conceptual paper on the potential implications of cohabitation for marital success concluded that cohabitation, in and of itself, should not have any effect on the outcome of a marriage. It should be viewed instead as having the potential for being either good or poor preparation for marriage, depending upon the characteristics of the individuals involved and the nature of the relationship itself (Ridley et al., 1978: 134). Based on existing research on cohabitation, they enumerated a typology of cohabiting relationships, each one having differing potential for influencing marriage.

The primary goal of the Linus Blanket relationship is emotional security. It usually involves one particularly insecure partner who needs to have a relationship with someone, without regard for whom or under what conditions. In such a relationship, open communication and successful problem solving do not take place. The experience does not serve as practice for improving the skills of the partners and this type of relationship does not enhance the probability of making a successful marriage.

The Emancipation relationship similarly provides poor preparation for marriage. Typified by Catholic females who maintain a pattern of frequent but short-lived cohabiting arrangements, it is a push-pull relationship in which peer

pressure and the desire for self-control cause someone to enter a cohabiting situation. On the other hand, the guilt feelings associated with "doing something wrong" prevent him or her from becoming fully involved in the relationship and lead to its eventual demise.

A third type of cohabiting relationship is the Convenience form, which is most typified by young males who wish to have "regularized sexual contact and the luxuries of domestic living without the responsibilities of a committed relationship" (Ridley et al., 1978: 131). While these relationships present a good opportunity for both male and female involved to learn the idea of reciprocity, it is unclear whether or not these relationships ever lead to marriage.

The Testing relationship is typically entered into by well-adjusted people exhibiting higher than average interpersonal skills. It is quasi-committed relationship in which the individuals involved, having met their basic security needs beforehand, are now ready to use the relationship to achieve a greater understanding of each other. The authors imply that these relationships are most likely to provide positive preparation for marriage (Ridley et al., 1978: 133-134).

Their analysis suggests that any benefit cohabitation has for marital success derives from its function as a role-transition aid between quasi involvement and marriage. They state that "the potential extensive demands of a cohabiting relationship, in particular a 'Testing' type of relationship,



more closely approximate marital demands than any other courtship pattern." Thus, cohabitation becomes an "ideal situation for 'trial marriage' and for learning the complexity of intimate relationship functioning" (Ridley et al., 1978: 133); and, in this context, should enhance the quality of the subsequent marriage of the partners.

While Ridley and his colleagues argue that cohabitation can function effectively as a trial marriage, it is unclear whether the typical cohabiting couple views the relationship in these terms. In her seminal research article on college cohabitation, Macklin noted that living together was "seldom the result of a considered decision, at least initially" (Macklin, 1972: 466). Most relationships involved a gradual "drifting into" staying together. Most participants tended to view cohabiting as representing serious involvement, but not as serious as engagement (Macklin, 1972: 466-467).

However, all persons Macklin interviewed indicated that they would not consider marriage without having lived with the person first. This suggests that while cohabitation is not seen as a deliberate testing of the relationship, it is seen as a necessary prelude to marriage. Macklin concludes that cohabitation is increasingly becoming a stage in the courtship process (Macklin, 1972: 470). This is further supported by the research of Lewis and his colleagues, in which a majority of the cohabitators in their sample described

their relationship as a "preparation for marriage" (Lewis et al., 1977: 371, Table 2).

Some sociologists, however, have recently called into question the assumption that cohabitation is primarily an aspect of courtship. Lyness' follow-up study of 23 dating couples and 15 cohabiting couples revealed that, after eight months, the cohabitators evinced very little change in status compared to the others; more of the going-together couples had either married or split up by this time. Lyness reasons that the short-term stability which characterizes cohabiting relationships suggests that these are more properly viewed as a short-term alternative to marriage rather than a distinct step in the courtship process as is dating, in which progress toward marriage is much more deliberate (Lyness, 1978: 67).

Both Yllo (1978) and Newcomb (1979), citing census data which show the increasing prevalence of unmarried cohabitation among the divorced, conclude that cohabitation is a short-term alternative to marriage for many who have already experienced "failure" in marriage. Newcomb questions the validity of seeing cohabitation as part of courtship by arguing that cohabitation is not effective as a "screening device" to select out poor marriage partners and thus does not result in improved mate selection (Newcomb, 1979: 599).

#### The Prevalence of Cohabitation

Estimates of the incidence of unmarried cohabitation in the United States vary across studies and across populations

studied. Early research in this area focused primarily upon college students. Peterman and his associates found that, in a sample of 1099 college students, 33.4 percent of the men and 32.3 percent of the women were either currently living with someone or had had a cohabiting experience (Peterman et al., 1974: 347). Bower and Christopherson's study of 1191 college students revealed a similar figure for male cohabitation, 34 percent, but found that only 23 percent of the females had ever cohabited (Bower and Christopherson, 1977: 449). Clayton and Voss, utilizing a nationwide random sample of 2510 young men drawn from Selective Service records, found that only 18 percent of these men had ever cohabited (Clayton and Voss, 1977: 275).

While estimates of the number of people who have ever cohabited vary from a low of 18 percent of the population to a high of 34 percent, estimates of the number of people living together unmarried at any one time are much smaller. Yllo (1978) computed an estimate of the current rate of cohabitation in the United States as of January, 1976, based on a national area probability sample of 2143 adults, all of whom were either married or living with someone of the opposite sex. She found that 1.9 percent of all couples were living together unmarried (Yllo, 1978: 42).

This figure agrees very closely with that cited by Glick and Norton (1977) based on preliminary results of the March 1977 Current Population Survey. They calculated that approximately 1,914,000 persons were living together

unmarried at that time, representing 2 percent of all couple households, or those containing an unrelated adult male and adult female with or without children. If the focus is narrowed to the number of persons who could be living together unmarried, the proportion represented by this figure increases slightly, cohabitators constituting 3.6 percent of all unmarried adults (Glick and Norton, 1977: 33).

The most recent data available are from the March 1980 Current Population Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. At this time, the number of unmarried-couple households had reached 1,560,000. Unmarried couples with no children comprised about 73 percent of the total, and increased by 247 percent from 1970 to 1980. The number of unmarried-couple households with children present doubled from 1977 to 1980 but represented a smaller proportion of all unmarried-couple households in 1980 (27 percent) than in 1970 (38 percent). By and large, these relationships do not represent such arrangements as an elderly person renting a room to a younger, opposite-sexed boarder. Only 1 percent of all unmarried-couple households had a person 65 years or older sharing living quarters with an unrelated person of the opposite sex who was under 35 years old (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981: 4).

#### Sociodemographic and Attitudinal Correlates of the Propensity to Cohabit

A number of sociodemographic and attitudinal factors have been shown to differentiate people who are likely to cohabit from those who are not likely to do so. Clayton and

Voss found that, for men, the likelihood of cohabiting outside of marriage is affected by marital history: 14 percent of those who have been married once, and 21 percent of those who have never married have cohabited, compared to 35 percent having cohabited among those with multiple-marriage experience (Clayton and Voss, 1977: 276). Henze and Hudson found that male cohabitators in their sample had the highest rate of divorced parents, compared to female cohabitators and male and female noncohabitators (Henze and Hudson, 1974: 725).

Social class, indexed by education and ethnicity, appears to be related to the likelihood of cohabiting. Clayton and Voss found that almost twice as many blacks as whites had cohabited, and that men who were not attending school and those who had less than a high-school education were more likely to have cohabited or to be cohabiting than their counterparts (Clayton and Voss, 1977: 278).

Several variables which can be considered to be measures of lifestyle liberalism have been found to be related to the likelihood of cohabitation. Cohabitators are less likely than noncohabitators to attend church frequently (Markowski, 1973: 40-41; Henze and Hudson, 1974: 726; Clayton and Voss, 1977: 280). Cohabitators are more inclined to smoke "pot" and to use hard drugs than are noncohabitators (Henze and Hudson, 1974: 726; Clayton and Voss, 1977: 281). Cohabitators are more likely than noncohabitators to have engaged in unconventional behavior, in general (Clayton and Voss, 1977: 280-281). There is a negative relationship

between age at first intercourse and the likelihood of cohabitation (Clayton and Voss, 1977: 281). Cohabitors are more willing than noncohabitators to indicate that they would consider participating in each of several nontraditional relationships, such as living in a commune, etc. (Bower and Christopherson, 1977: 450). Cohabitors desire significantly fewer children throughout their lifetime than do noncohabitators (Bower and Christopherson, 1977: 451).

In one of the very few studies of its kind, Newcomb and Bentler (1980) compared selected background and personality characteristics of 159 newlywed couples, among whom 74 couples, or 47 percent of their sample, had lived together for at least some duration prior to marriage. They hypothesized that (a) cohabitators would have fewer internalized constraints and restrictions on both behavior and self-perceptions, and (b) cohabitators would be less inhibited in their outward dealings with friends and society and less adherent to traditional values.

These were generally supported by the data. They found that women who cohabited prior to marriage were significantly more likely to have been previously divorced and to report a religious preference of "none" than women who had not cohabited premaritally (Newcomb and Bentler, 1980: 74). Cohabiting men were more androgynous (less masculine) and less religious than their counterparts, and tended to rate themselves as more attractive than noncohabiting males. Cohabiting women were less clothes-conscious, law abiding,

and religious, while being more extroverted, liberal, androgynous (less feminine), and having more leadership qualities than noncohabiting women. Cohabitors revealed greater accuracy of self perception and reported engaging in significantly more diverse sexual activities (Newcomb and Bentler, 1980: 76-77).

#### The Nature of the Cohabiting Relationship

Several studies have examined relationship-quality differences between cohabitators on the one hand, and either dating or married couples on the other. Findings are not always clear. It appears that most cohabiting relationships are relatively short lived when compared to marriage. Macklin found that, at the time of her survey, one-third of these relationships had dissolved, having lasted an average of four-and-one-half months (Macklin, 1972: 470). Peterman and his associates found that 82 percent of males' and 75 percent of females' longest cohabiting experiences were of less than six months duration. Also, half of the cohabitators in their sample reported engaging in more than one such arrangement. This pattern was much more common among males: 62 percent of the males versus 41 percent of the females had engaged in more than one cohabiting arrangement (Peterman et al., 1974: 348).

Like marriage, these relationships are described by the participants as "love" or "intimate" relationships, as opposed to "friendships" or other less intimate associations. On the other hand, unlike marriage, cohabitation

tends more often to involve living in a situation which includes third parties; 60 percent of the cohabitators in Peterman and his associates' sample fall into this category (Peterman et al., 1974: 348). Also, cohabitation is more often a clandestine arrangement. Only 21 percent of the men and 26 percent of the women in this sample of cohabitators reported that both partners claimed the same mailing address (Peterman et al., 1974: 348).

Whether or not cohabiting relationships are characterized by higher levels of adjustment than are those of going-together couples remains problematic. One study found that going-together couples were more committed to marriage and demonstrated greater reciprocity of "key" feelings; while cohabitators, in contrast, did not reciprocate the kinds of feelings that one would expect to form the basis of a good heterosexual relationship (Lyness et al., 1972: 309-310). In juxtaposition to this, others have noted that cohabitators report a higher mean level of adjustment and generally consider their most important relationships to be of a higher quality than do noncohabitators (Peterman et al., 1974: 350).

Lewis and his associates find that there is no difference between unmarried cohabitators and noncohabiting engaged persons in commitment to partner, although cohabitators are significantly less committed to marriage than are engaged persons. However, unmarried cohabitators are significantly less committed to their partners than are married persons (Lewis et al., 1977: 370).



These researchers found different factors to be associated with pair commitment, depending upon the type of relationship in which a couple was involved. For the total sample, the strongest correlates of pair commitment were time spent together, couple happiness, length of acquaintance, homogamy, and quality of dyadic interaction. Among married respondents, the strongest correlates of pair commitment were couple happiness, length of acquaintance, and father's occupation. Among noncohabiting engaged persons, the strongest correlates of pair commitment were length of acquaintance and mother's education. Among cohabiting respondents, the strongest correlate of pair commitment was couple happiness, followed by SES homogamy, dyadic consensus, and dyadic interaction (Lewis et al., 1977: 371). The fact that more relationship-centered variables are related to commitment among cohabiting couples than either married or engaged couples suggests, as the authors pointed out, that "the cohabitants' determination to remain together as a couple seems to be largely predicated upon the current quality of their relationships" (Lewis et al., 1977: 372. Emphasis in original).

Interestingly, Lewis and his colleagues found significant differences in pair commitment by type of cohabiting relationship. Most commitment was reported by those who viewed cohabitation as a substitute for marriage; less commitment was reported by those who viewed cohabitation as preparation for marriage; and least commitment was reported

by those who viewed cohabitation as a temporary involvement (Lewis et al., 1977: 371).

Comparing cohabiting with married couples, Cole found no differences in couple adjustment and satisfaction, although cohabiting couples reported significantly fewer barriers to termination of the relationship than did married couples (Cole, 1975: 44). Stafford and her colleagues examined the division of household labor among cohabiting and married couples and found that among both groups the women were responsible for and were performing most household tasks. Both married men and women were significantly more traditional in the performance of household tasks than were cohabiting men and women, although they were no different in the distribution of responsibility.

#### Research on Marital Success

Marital success is a broad concept which can be considered to refer to both marital quality and marital stability. Marital quality, as defined by Spanier and Lewis, is "the subjective evaluation of a married couple's relationship on a number of dimensions and evaluations" (Spanier and Lewis, 1980: 826). This term subsumes such commonly measured referents as marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, and marital happiness. Marital stability refers to the tendency of a marriage to remain intact over time.

Research on these dimensions is quite voluminous and will be only briefly summarized here. Variables that have been found to affect marital quality and stability can be

divided into three categories: structural variables, that refer to demographic and sociocultural factors which tend to structure dyadic functioning; cognitive variables such as attitudes and perceptions; and interactional variables, which refer to measures of dyadic interaction and dyadic functioning.

### Structural Variables

Social status. Blood and Wolfe computed an index of husband's social status based upon the husband's occupation, income, education, and ethnic background. They found a positive linear relationship between husbands' social status and wives' expressed satisfaction with the marriage (Blood and Wolfe, 1960: 253). Ethnicity, a major dimension of social status, is itself an important correlate of marital success. Blacks tend to be less satisfied with their marriages (Renne, 1970: 57; Scanzoni, 1975: 136) and to have higher dissolution rates (Galligan and Bahr, 1978: 288). Among the remarried, however, social status, as measured by occupational prestige, is not very significant. Albrecht found that, among remarried persons, there was no association between marital happiness and whether the respondent was employed in a white-collar or blue-collar occupation (Albrecht, 1979: 865).

Education. Blood and Wolfe found a strong, positive relationship between husband's educational attainment and wife's marital satisfaction (Blood and Wolfe, 1960: 254). Galligan and Bahr found education to be a powerful correlate

of marital stability: respondents in their study who had not completed high school had a marital dissolution rate almost twice as large as those who had attended college (Galligan and Bahr, 1978: 288). Glenn and Weaver found the relationship between education and marital satisfaction, for men, to be positive and significant, but of small magnitude; no significant relationship emerged for women (Glenn and Weaver, 1978: 277). Mott and Moore found a negative association between education and marital disruption among both black and white women (Mott and Moore, 1979: 363).

Income and employment status. Income has been found to be related to measures of marital success by some researchers, but not others. Renne (1970) found income to be positively related to marital satisfaction, and Galligan and Bahr (1978) found assets to be positively related to marital stability. However, Mott and Moore found that there was no association between husbands' earnings and marital stability for either blacks or whites. Despite the lack of any direct effects of income, these researchers discovered that, among whites, having no accumulated debts was associated with lower levels of marital disruption. For blacks, recent improvements in the family's financial position were associated with lower probabilities of marital disruption (Mott and Moore, 1979: 362).

Jorgensen, examining the relationship between socioeconomic rewards and perceived marital quality, found only limited support for the hypothesis that income affects

marital satisfaction. His data showed that husbands' perceptions of wives' role performances and husbands' marital satisfaction were not related at all to socioeconomic reward levels. Among the wives, only perceptions of husbands' role competence as breadwinners and satisfaction with husbands' income contributions were significantly related to income; while other aspects of marital quality such as companionship, affection, and dyadic commitment were unaffected (Jorgensen, 1979: 832).

Employment status appears to be related to marital stability but not to marital satisfaction. Booth and White found that, for both men and women, those who were employed full-time were significantly more likely to be considering divorce than those without full-time employment (Booth and White, 1980: 611). A similar finding by Mott and Moore was true only for white women: number of hours worked per week and years of work experience were significant predictors of marital disruption (Mott and Moore, 1979: 362). Locksley's data show, however, that neither a wife's employment nor the level of a wife's interest in her job have any effect on marital adjustment and companionship (Locksley, 1980: 343-344).

Age at marriage. Booth and White (1980) noted that those who marry young are more likely to have considered divorce. Among both black and white women, there is a strong inverse association between age at marriage and marital disruption, even after controlling for all the other

factors which are known to be associated with aging (Mott and Moore, 1979: 363).

Homogamy. Osmond and Martin found that homogamy of background and homogamy of spouses' education were generally important in explaining the variance in proportion of intact marriages in their sample. Occupational and educational homogamy and mutuality of friends are important correlates of marital intactness in marriages characterized by an autocratic decision-making structure (Osmond and Martin, 1978: 320, 324). Age homogamy and similarity of religious activity have also been found to be significant and positive correlates of marital satisfaction (Blood and Wolfe, 1960: 257; Chadwick et al., 1976: 437; Albrecht, 1979: 865).

Presence of children. There are no clear-cut conclusions regarding the effects of children on marital satisfaction and marital stability. Blood and Wolfe found a curvilinear relationship between number of children in a family and marital satisfaction, with highest satisfaction occurring when the number of children is three (Blood and Wolfe, 1960: 262). Chadwick and others (1976: 437) found a positive relationship between number of children and specific marital role satisfaction. Wives with children in Jorgensen and Johnson's sample were significantly less liberal toward divorce than were childless wives (Jorgensen and Johnson, 1980: 623).

On the other hand, many sociologists have found children to be a detriment to marriage. Both Rollins and

Feldman (1970: 25) and Glenn and Weaver (1978: 279) found the presence of young children in the home to be negatively related to marital satisfaction. Houseknecht found that voluntarily childless wives scored higher on dyadic cohesion than did wives with children (Houseknecht, 1979: 261), while Renne found childless marriages to be more satisfactory in general than those with children (Renne, 1970: 61). Booth and White's data reveal that those with preschoolers in the home are twice as likely as others to have considered divorce (Booth and White, 1980: 610).

Albrecht's study of remarried persons showed differential effects of children on marital happiness depending upon sex of respondent. Husbands with children from the current marriage reported greater comparative happiness than husbands without children; while wives with children from the current marriage reported less happiness than wives without children (Albrecht, 1979: 866).

Others have failed to find any relationship between number of children and marital satisfaction (Paris and Luckey, 1966: 216). Mott and Moore found no evidence of any pattern of association between childbearing and marital disruption, after controlling for related factors such as education, age, and duration of marriage (Mott and Moore, 1979: 363).

Duration of Marriage. Length of marriage has generally been shown to be negatively related to marital satisfaction, at least through the childbearing years (Blood and Wolfe,

1960: 264-265; Rollins and Feldman, 1970: 25-26; Rollins and Cannon, 1974: 275; Chadwick et al., 1976: 437). Mott and Moore found the highest probability of marital disruption in marriages of intermediate length, that is, between two and five years (Mott and Moore, 1979: 363).

### Cognitive Variables

Osmond and Martin found that belief in marriage as a permanent commitment is strongly related to marital intactness for couples with an autocratic form of decision making, but not for others (Osmond and Martin, 1978: 325). Church attendance, which may be considered an index of conservatism, has been found to be positively related to marital satisfaction (Glenn and Weaver, 1978: 279). Intensity of religious beliefs is negatively associated with consideration of divorce (Booth and White, 1980: 615).

Brinkerhoff and White, studying marital satisfaction in an economically marginal population, noted that while measures of the husband's actual economic role performance were insignificantly correlated with measures of marital satisfaction, various perceptual variables were highly associated with marital satisfaction, such as husbands' and wives' satisfaction with their standard of living, wives' perception of the number of economic problems, and wives' satisfaction with the household division of labor (Brinkerhoff and White, 1978: 264-265). Chadwick and his associates found that evaluation of spouse's role performance was a very powerful



factor in explaining marital satisfaction, especially among women (Chadwick et al., 1976: 437).

#### Interactional Variables

The manner in which husbands and wives interact with each other seems to have a significant effect upon marital success. The degree to which husbands and wives communicate about, and have an equal say in, decision making is positively related to marital satisfaction and marital stability (Blood and Wolfe, 1960: 258; Osmond and Martin, 1978: 327). Osmond and Martin concluded that the egalitarianism of the decision-making process is the single most important variable for explaining marital intactness in their sample (Osmond and Martin, 1978: 328).

Burke and his associates found that the greater the likelihood that husbands and wives disclose their problems and tensions to their spouses, the more positive their standing on both marital satisfaction and life satisfaction (Burke et al., 1976: 537). Both the quality of couple communication and a couple's rating of their communication are strong predictors of marital satisfaction. Hobart and Klausner found that psychological empathy (insight into the own personal-characteristics rating of one's mate) is positively related to marital adjustment. Also, female empathy is more-importantly related to marital adjustment than is male empathy (Hobart and Klausner, 1959: 259).

SummaryCohabitation Research

None of the empirical work accomplished to date indicates that there is any relationship between premarital cohabitation and marital success. Theoretical papers have argued that premarital cohabitation, per se, does not influence subsequent marital quality. Rather, the type of cohabiting relationship engaged in by a couple determines whether or not the experience will have positive or negative consequences for marriage. When such a relationship is used for convenience of sexual access, emotional security, or an attempt at "emancipation," it is not likely to enhance the probability of making a successful marriage. If, instead, cohabitation is a testing situation in which individuals have met their basic security needs beforehand and are now trying to achieve a greater understanding of each other, then the relationship is likely to provide positive preparation for marriage.

While the evidence suggests that people tend to "drift" into cohabiting relationships, individuals increasingly view cohabitation as a necessary prelude to marriage. However, cohabitators manifest more short-term stability than traditional going-together couples, leading some sociologists to argue that, for many men and women, cohabitation is a short-term alternative to marriage. This is particularly true for people with a history of divorce, who appear more reluctant to marry again without testing the relationship first. The

value of cohabitation as an effective mate-screening device has been questioned.

Estimates of the number of people who have ever cohabited, based upon samples of the college population, run as high as 34 percent. However, studies utilizing random samples of the general population indicate that only about 2 percent of all couple households are currently cohabiting and 18 percent of all individuals have ever cohabited. Since this latter estimate is based upon a sample of young men, the actual proportion of individuals of all ages who have ever cohabited is probably considerably larger.

Various sociodemographic factors are seen to distinguish those who have from those who have not cohabited outside of marriage. Males whose parents are divorced or who have themselves experienced multiple marriages are especially likely to have cohabited. Blacks have cohabited with greater frequency than have whites. Education has been found to be negatively related to the likelihood of cohabiting. Cohabitors tend, more than noncohabitors, to be less religious and more likely to see themselves as attractive, androgynous, extroverted, and nonconforming.

Cohabiting relationships tend to be relatively short-lived. Roughly half of the people who report cohabiting experience have participated in more than one such arrangement. Cohabiting relationships are described as love relationships by those involved. However, unlike marriage, they tend frequently to involve living with third parties and are often clandestine arrangements.

There is no clear-cut evidence to suggest that cohabiting relationships are characterized by higher levels of adjustment than are those of traditional going-together couples. Cohabitors are significantly less committed to marriage than are engaged persons, but no less committed to their partners. Cohabitors are, however, less committed to their partners than are married persons.

The factors associated with pair commitment vary depending upon whether couples are cohabitators, noncohabiting engaged persons, or marrieds; indicating that a cohabiting couple's determination to remain together is more likely than that of others to be predicated on the quality of the relationship alone. Compared to married couples, cohabitators do not seem to differ on measures of adjustment and satisfaction. On the other hand, cohabitators perceive fewer barriers to termination of the relationship than do married couples.

Cohabiting relationships do not seem to be characterized by any greater "liberation" from traditional roles than is the case in marriage. In both situations, women are taking most of the responsibility for and performing most of the household chores.

#### Marital Success

Generally, indices of social class are positively associated with marital satisfaction and negatively associated with marital disruption. More-educated persons tend to be more satisfied with their marriages and tend less often to

end them. Blacks are less satisfied with their marriages than whites and have higher dissolution rates. Some research has shown a positive relationship between income and measures of marital success. Other studies have found that income has only a limited effect. Among whites, having no accumulated debts, and, among blacks, recent improvements in the family's financial position are associated with marital stability. Socioeconomic reward levels are positively associated with perception of the husband as a competent breadwinner.

Employment status, particularly among women, is positively related to marital disruption but is not related to marital satisfaction. Those who marry young are particularly susceptible to divorce.

Homogamy of background and education, age homogamy, and similarity of religious activity are all found to be related to marital satisfaction and marital stability.

Research on the effects of children on marital satisfaction has not proved conclusive. Blood and Wolfe (1960) found a curvilinear relationship between the number of children and marital satisfaction, with highest satisfaction expressed in families with three children. Others have found a direct, positive relationship between children and marital satisfaction, while still others have found that children diminish marital satisfaction. However, when controlling for education, age, and length of marriage, no

relationship has been found between the number of children in a family and marital disruption.

Duration of marriage has been shown, in repeated studies, to be negatively related to marital satisfaction, at least through the childrearing years. The highest probability of marital disruption has been found to occur in marriages of intermediate length, that is, between two and five years.

Belief in marriage as a permanent commitment is strongly related to marital stability in autocratic families. Church attendance and intensity of religious beliefs are positively related to marital success.

Various perceptual factors, such as satisfaction with standard of living, perception of few economic problems in the family, and satisfaction with the household division of labor have been found to be positively related to marital satisfaction, especially among women.

Interactional factors have been shown to be strongly related to marital success. Mode of communication, perceived quality of communication, mode of decision making, and ability to empathize are significant correlates of marital satisfaction and marital intactness.

#### An Overall Model of Premarital Cohabitation and Its Relationship to Marital Success

Figure 2-1 presents an overall model of the major factors affecting premarital cohabitation and measures of marital success. Most of the relationships depicted have been

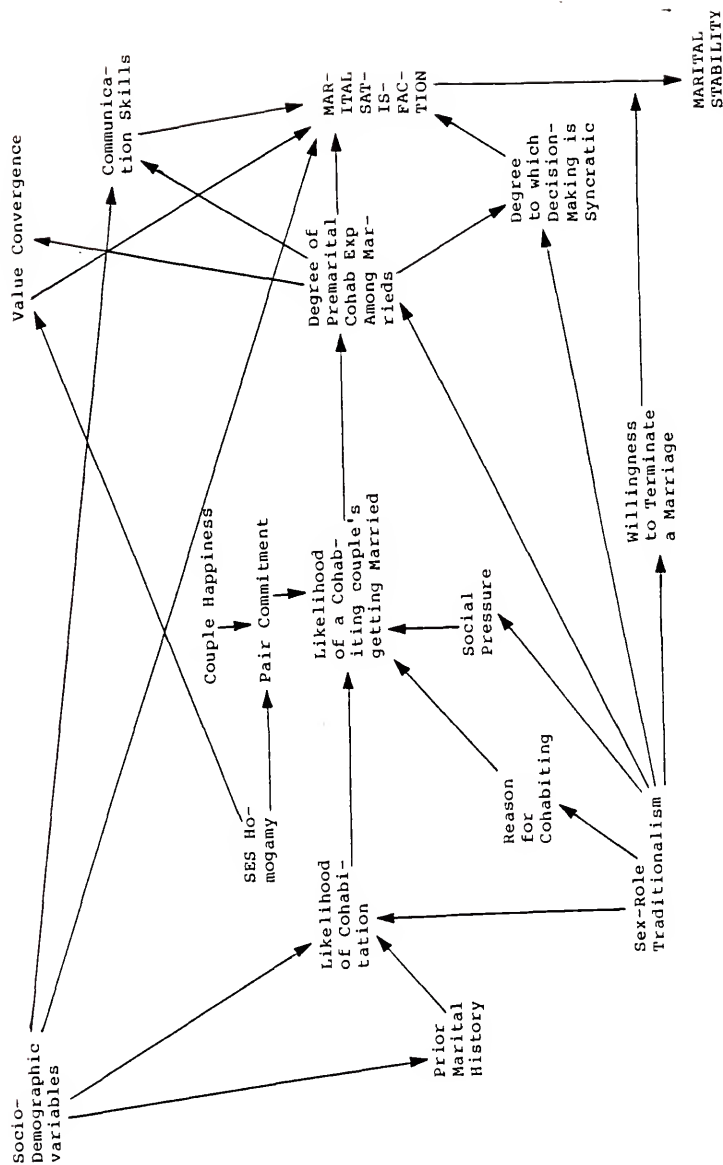
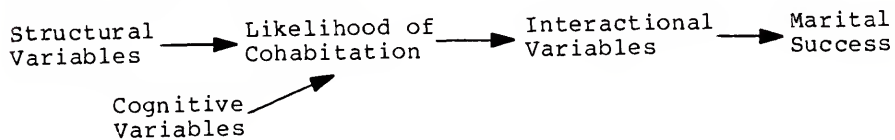


FIGURE 2-1. HYPOTHESIZED MODEL OF THE MAJOR FACTORS INFLUENCING PREMARITAL COHABITATION AND MARITAL SUCCESS.

extracted from research findings, while a few are hypothesized by the author. This overall model provides a theoretical framework for the present study.

This model includes structural, cognitive, and interactional variables and depicts their relationships to premarital cohabitation and measures of marital success. The model posits this causal flow:



According to the model, various sociodemographic factors such as respondent's occupation, respondent's parents' occupations, respondent's age, education, income, employment status, and religious activity influence whether he or she will enter a nonmarital cohabiting relationship. The likelihood of cohabitation is also affected by a person's prior marital history and the degree to which his or her attitudes toward relationships are characterized by sex-role traditionalism.

Whether or not a cohabiting relationship moves on to marriage is then determined by a number of factors, such as the degree of commitment each person has to the permanence of the relationship, the reason for cohabiting, and the amount of internal or external pressure the couple feels to get married. The living-together experience is then hypothesized to be related to positive couple interaction in marriage. Cohabiting couples who subsequently marry should



exhibit more positive forms of communication and decision making than do noncohabitators. Communication style and mode of decision making are strong correlates of marital satisfaction. Hence, marital satisfaction is presumed to be affected by premarital cohabitation via its influence on the nature of dyadic interaction.

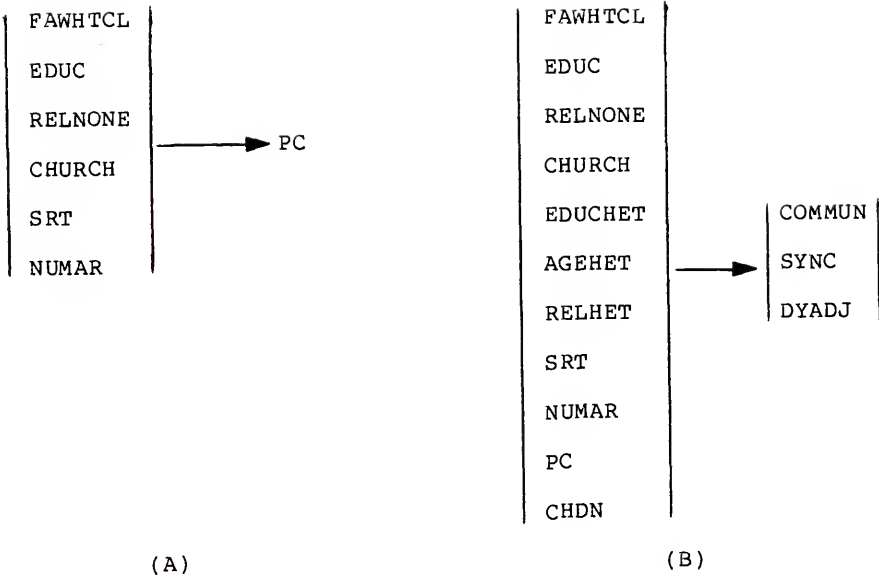
Other relationships are depicted in the model. Sex-role traditionalism affects one's reason for cohabiting and the amount of social pressure felt by a cohabiting couple to get married. Sex-role traditionalism is also related to mode of decision making in a marriage and the willingness to terminate an unsatisfactory marriage. Pair commitment among cohabitators is affected by couple happiness and social-class homogamy. Value convergence within the dyad is influenced by social-class homogamy and by the cohabiting experience. Value convergence is related to marital satisfaction. Sociodemographic variables are related to a person's prior marital history, and affect communication skills and marital satisfaction independent of other factors. Marital stability, as measured by marital intactness, is determined by couple satisfaction and the readiness to terminate an unsatisfactory marriage.

#### Models For The Present Study

As discussed in Chapter I, the limitations of a cross-sectional design dictate certain restrictions in regard to testing the overall model in its path-analytic form, as depicted above. Instead, many of the same variables will be

examined in the context of two separate models shown in Figure 2-2. As shown in Figure 2-2(a), the variables that will be examined as predictors of the likelihood that a couple cohabited before marriage are father's occupation, respondent's education, respondent's religious preference, respondent's church attendance, respondent's sex-role traditionalism, and whether or not the respondent has been previously married.

Figure 2-2(b) shows the model to be tested to explain differences in communication, decision making, and marital quality. In this model, several variables are hypothesized to affect these aspects of marital functioning. These are father's occupation, respondent's education, respondent's religious preference, respondent's church attendance, the degree of couple heterogamy in the dimensions of age, educational attainment, and church attendance, respondent's sex-role traditionalism, respondent's marital history, whether or not the respondent cohabited premaritally with his or her future spouse, and presence of minor children in the home. It is also expected that quality of communication and mode of decision making will be associated with marital quality. Age at marriage was not employed as a predictor in either model because it exhibited very high collinearity with having been married more than once and age heterogamy. Since these latter variables were deemed theoretically more important to the analyses, they were retained, and age at marriage was deleted.



FAWHTCL = Respondent's Father has a White Collar Occupation  
 EDUC = Respondent's Education  
 RELNONE = Respondent States a Religious Preference of "None"  
 CHURCH = Frequency of Church Attendance  
 SRT = Sex-Role Traditionalism  
 NUMAR = Respondent is in a Second or Later Marriage  
 PC = Having Cohabited with Future Spouse Prior to Marriage  
 EDUCHET = Educational Heterogamy  
 AGEHET = Age Heterogamy  
 RELHET = Religious Activity Heterogamy  
 CHDN = Respondent has Minor Children Present in the Home  
 COMMUN = Respondent's Perceived Quality of Communication in the Marriage  
 SYNC = Respondent's Marriage is Characterized by Syncratic Decision Making  
 DYADJ = Dyadic Adjustment

FIGURE 2-2. A CAUSAL MODEL OF (A) FACTORS AFFECTING PRE-MARITAL COHABITATION AND (B) FACTORS AFFECTING COMMUNICATION, DECISION MAKING, AND SATISFACTION IN MARRIAGE.

### Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses will be tested in the present study:

1. Respondents whose parents are employed in blue-collar occupations are more likely to have cohabited premaritally than are those whose parents are employed in white-collar occupations
2. There is an inverse, linear relationship between education and extent of premarital cohabitation
3. Those who state a religious preference of "none" are more likely to have cohabited premaritally than are those who indicate preference for a specific religion
4. There is an inverse, linear relationship between church attendance and the likelihood of having cohabited premaritally
5. There is an inverse, linear relationship between sex-role traditionalism and the likelihood of having cohabited premaritally
6. Those in their second or later marriage are more likely than others to have cohabited premaritally
7. Respondents whose parents are employed in white-collar occupations express more positive communication and greater marital satisfaction than do respondents whose parents are employed in blue-collar occupations
8. There is a direct, linear relationship between education and both communication and expressed marital satisfaction
9. Those who list a religious preference of "none" express less marital satisfaction and less positive communication than do those who indicate preference for a specific religion
10. There is a direct, linear relationship between religious activity and both communication and expressed marital satisfaction
11. There is an inverse, linear relationship between the degree of educational heterogamy between spouses and both communication and expressed marital satisfaction
12. There is an inverse, linear relationship between the degree of age heterogamy between spouses and both communication and expressed marital satisfaction

13. There is an inverse, linear relationship between the degree of religious-activity heterogamy between spouses and both communication and expressed marital satisfaction
14. There is no relationship between sex-role traditionalism and either communication or expressed marital satisfaction
15. Those in their second or later marriage are less likely than are those in their first marriage to express positive communication and high marital satisfaction
16. Those who have cohabited premaritally are more likely than are those who have not so cohabited to express both positive communication and high marital satisfaction
17. There is no relationship between presence of minor children in the marriage and either communication or expressed marital satisfaction
18. Respondents whose parents are employed in white-collar occupations are more likely to exhibit syncratic decision making than are those whose parents are employed in blue-collar occupations
19. There is direct, linear relationship between education and the likelihood of exhibiting syncratic decision making in marriage
20. Those who state a religious preference of "none" are more likely than are those who indicate preference for a specific religion to exhibit syncratic decision making
21. There is an inverse, linear relationship between religious activity and the likelihood of exhibiting syncratic decision making
22. There is an inverse, linear relationship between the degree of educational heterogamy between spouses and the likelihood of exhibiting syncratic decision making
23. There is an inverse, linear relationship between the degree of age heterogamy between spouses and the likelihood of exhibiting syncratic decision making
24. There is an inverse, linear relationship between sex-role traditionalism and the likelihood of exhibiting syncratic decision making

25. There is an inverse, linear relationship between the degree of religious-activity heterogamy between spouses and the likelihood of exhibiting syncratic decision making
26. Those in their second or later marriage are less likely than those in their first marriage to exhibit syncratic decision making
27. Those who have cohabited premaritally are more likely than are those who have not cohabited to exhibit syncratic decision making
28. Those with minor children are less likely than are others to exhibit syncratic decision making

### CHAPTER THREE METHODS

The major thrust of this study is to examine the effect that premarital cohabitation has on marital quality. An ideal design would be a longitudinal one in which it would be possible to control for all other variables that might influence marital quality. An example of such a design would be a panel study of young couples, half of whom were cohabiting and half of whom were seriously involved, but not cohabiting. Couples in each of the groups would have to be matched on sociodemographic variables and interactional-skills levels at the beginning of the study, in order to ensure that these factors would not influence subsequent marital quality and thus confound the effects of the experimental variable. The panel of couples could be surveyed periodically to determine how many couples in each group either stayed the same, broke up, or got married; and in order to compare prior cohabitators with noncohabitators on measures of marital quality.

#### Rationale for Use of Cross-Sectional Design

Given the limited resources available, it was not deemed practical to undertake a panel study of this kind. The time needed to complete such a project and the possible losses due to sample attrition were considered to be major drawbacks. Instead, it was decided to employ a

cross-sectional design, in which a sample of recently-married couples would be surveyed regarding the extent of cohabitation before marriage and the current level of marital satisfaction perceived by the partners. A major assumption of the study is that premarital cohabitation is, as of this date, a fairly common practice. Given this state of affairs, it was considered likely that a sample of recently-married couples would yield a significant proportion of couples who had lived together before marrying. Utilizing multivariate techniques on the data renders possible a comparison of prior cohabitators with noncohabitators on marital satisfaction while controlling for relevant sociodemographic and interactional variables.

#### Sociodemographic Bounds of the Sample

It was decided to limit the sample to couples married for not less than one year, but not more than two years, with both partners white, the bride at least 20 years of age at the time of marriage, and neither bride nor groom older than 45 years at the time of marriage. There are several reasons for limiting the sample in this manner. First, black couples were excluded because cohabitation among blacks may occur for different reasons and may have different effects on the marriage experience than is the case for whites. Also, it was desirable to control for the separate effects, apart from cohabitation, of the race variable on marital satisfaction. Blacks tend to report significantly less marital satisfaction than do whites (Renne, 1970; Scanzoni, 1975).



The requirement that the bride be 20 or older at marriage was intended to ensure that she had some time before marriage to be personally and financially independent enough to enter a cohabiting arrangement. Men are generally freer from parental restriction than are women, so this requirement did not seem necessary for the groom. The maximum age of 45 years for both bride and groom at the time of marriage is somewhat arbitrary, but it is believed that premarital cohabitation is more likely to occur among younger couples. Glick and Spanier demonstrated, in 1975, that the number of persons 35 years and older living in unmarried arrangements was only about two-thirds as large as the number under age 35. Among never-married individuals in unmarried cohabiting relationships, fully 85 percent were under age 35 (Glick and Spanier, 1980: 22).

The requirement that the couples be married a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years ensured that the couple had been married long enough for a clear-cut marital adjustment pattern to emerge. There are three reasons for the maximum limit. First, extensive, open cohabitation is a relatively recent phenomenon, and it is likely that couples married prior to the mid-seventies did not cohabit so frequently prior to marriage. Second, if a couple has been married too long, they may not be able to recall very much detailed information about the cohabiting experience. Third, and most important, it is reasonable that if cohabitation makes any difference in marital satisfaction, this

effect would most likely manifest itself in the very early years of marriage. After two years or so of marriage, the potential benefits of cohabitation as either a mate-selection filter or a role-transition aid should be overshadowed by the marital experience itself. Over time, poorly adjusted couples will select themselves out of marriage through separation and divorce. Role adjustments made over time in marriage will be more significant to current marital satisfaction than adjustments made during premarital cohabitation. Hence, the effects of premarital cohabitation on marital interaction are likely to dissipate after a certain period of time.

#### Use of Mail-Survey Technique

Data collection was accomplished by questionnaires sent through the mail to each husband and wife in the sample. This technique was chosen over the face-to-face interview for several reasons: (a) the difficulty of arranging convenient times to interview both husband and wife at home without intruding on their privacy; (b) the ability of the mail questionnaire to reach large numbers of people in a minimum amount of time; (c) the probable reduction in socially desirable responses to sensitive questions due to the fact that the researcher is not present. Also, the author believes that the costs in researcher time and effort necessitated by face-to-face interviewing outweigh any advantages this method has in research of the present kind: a study dealing with relatively clear-cut issues, utilizing

previously-tested indexes and scales of known reliability and validity.

In order to achieve maximum response rate, this study employed the Total Design Method (TDM) for mail surveys as delineated by Dillman (1978). The TDM method is organized around the principle of social exchange. It is designed to maximize rewards and minimize costs of completion to the respondent. The respondent is rewarded by the sense of being "consulted" on an important topic and making a contribution to scientific knowledge. Costs are reduced by making the questionnaire as interesting and as easy to complete as possible.

A total of four mailings are called for. The initial package consists of a cover letter plus questionnaires. This is followed one week later by a postcard reminder (which also serves as a thank-you note to those who have already responded) sent to everyone. The third mailing consists of a follow-up letter and replacement questionnaires sent to nonrespondents only, after three weeks. The final follow-up consists of another cover letter plus replacement questionnaires, sent by certified mail to all nonrespondents after seven weeks (Dillman, 1978: 183). In this study, the TDM format was followed, for the most part, with certain exceptions to be discussed in a later section of this report.

Dillman has shown that TDM surveys, to date, have an average response rate of 74 percent (Dillman, 1978: 21). Other researchers have demonstrated that high response rates

to mail surveys can consistently be achieved when follow-up contacts are used and the topic is of high salience to the respondent. In fact, these two variables have been found to explain 50.5 percent of the variance in final response rates (Heberlein and Baumgartner, 1978: 451). Controlling for contacts and salience, questionnaire length is only minimally important. Each additional question reduces response rate by only .05 percent (Heberlein and Baumgartner, 1978: 453).

### The Sample

Florida Marriage Records on file at the Alachua County Courthouse in Gainesville, Florida, were utilized for sample selection. These records represent all married couples who applied for a marriage license in Alachua County, regardless of where the actual ceremony was performed. Thus, while most of the couples listed Gainesville residences and were married in Gainesville, a substantial minority were from other cities in Florida or from other states and were married elsewhere.

An enumeration was made of all couples who were married between October 6, 1978, and October 8, 1979, who were also white, the bride was at least 20 years old, and neither spouse was older than 45 at the time of marriage. This resulted in an original sampling frame of 1,116 couples. Four couples were immediately excluded because of personal acquaintance with the researcher; this left 1,112 couples.

It was then decided to include in the sample all those couples for whom current addresses could be located. There were ten couples in which both bride and groom listed out-of-state addresses. These were automatically included in the sample, and questionnaires were sent to the groom's address as listed on the marriage certificate.

For all other couples, four different sources were consulted to locate current addresses: the 1980 Gainesville Telephone Directory (current as of October, 1979); the 1979 Gainesville City Directory (the most recent volume available at the time of sample selection, current of as May, 1979); the 1980 University of Florida Faculty and Student Directory (current as of October, 1979); and the various 1980 telephone directories for Florida cities outside of the Gainesville area. Employing all these references, current addresses could be found for another 584 couples from the original enumeration. The final target sample selected for mailout was 594 couples, or 53 percent of all couples on the sampling frame.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It should be pointed out that the bride's or groom's addresses listed on even the most recent marriage certificates in the sample were at least one year old at the time of sample enumeration. It was not advisable to simply use these addresses for the survey mailout. Should a couple have moved shortly after marriage, which is frequently the case, questionnaires would never have reached them due to the one-year limit on forwarding of first-class mail. Consequently, it was decided that the most efficient means of delimiting the sample would be to include only those couples for whom there was maximum likelihood that mail would either reach them directly or would be forwarded to them. This was reasonably assured by utilizing sources of sample addresses which were current as of October, 1979. Since the mailout

### Possible Biases in the Sample

Certain biases can be expected to inhere in the sample due to the method of sample selection and the characteristics of the sample locale. To begin with, automatically excluded from representation here are blacks, teenage couples, and marriages of people beyond their middle forties. It is very likely that the sample overrepresents students, because Gainesville, a city of about 70,000 people, is dominated by a large state university with an enrollment of approximately 30,000 students. Because of the proximity of the university, it is likely that husbands and wives in the sample will be characterized by higher-than-average levels of educational attainment.

Considering that more middle-class persons, as opposed to working- or lower-class persons, attend college, the sample may be overrepresentative of middle-class couples. Contributing slightly to this bias is the fact that the telephone directory was heavily relied upon to locate sample couples. Proportionately more lower-class respondents may be without a phone.

It is also possible that the sample is somewhat biased toward the less geographically mobile individuals, in that those who moved away from the area were less likely to be reached by the mailout. Finally, some occupational bias can

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occurred in October, 1980, even if a couple moved after October, 1979, their mail should still have been forwarded to them.

be expected to occur in the sample because of the domination of the university in Gainesville, and the limited industry present. The sample should be characterized much more by white-collar, and much less by blue-collar, occupations than would be true for many other areas of the country.

#### Construction of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was constructed and pretested on 62 married respondents, contacted in upper-level and graduate classes at the University of Florida in June and July of 1980. The pretest enabled the author to detect areas which required greater clarity of wording and revealed the need for one major change in the instrument. The Wilson-Patterson Conservatism Scale (Wilson, 1973), an instrument used to assess a respondent's attitude along the liberal-conservative dimension, proved excessively confusing and was eliminated. In its place was substituted a sex-role attitude scale (to be discussed below). The final version of the instrument consisted of a 16-page questionnaire, 14 pages containing questions and scales to tap the variables of interest, a front cover with instructions for completion of the questionnaire, and a back cover soliciting respondents' comments.

#### Marital Quality

perceived marital quality within the marriage was the major outcome variable in this study. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale, as developed by Spanier (1976), was used to measure this variable. The DAS is a 32-item scale which taps an

individual's subjective evaluation of several aspects of his or her marriage, such as extent of agreement on key issues; frequency of consideration of divorce or separation; frequency of quarreling; frequency of affectional expression; degree of happiness in the marriage; attitude toward the future of the relationship; and other areas (see Appendix A). Factor analysis of the DAS revealed that there are four major factors, or subscales, contained within the overall scale: these are dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression (Spanier, 1976: 22). The scale has a possible score range of 0-151, with highest numbers indicating greatest adjustment. In this study, the coding scheme suggested by Spanier was, for the most part, adhered to.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The DAS as used in the present study contained a slight difference in answer format for two of the items. For the item, "Do you kiss your mate?", the Spanier answer categories and codes are "every day" (4); "almost every day" (3); "occasionally" (2); "rarely" (1); "never" (0). In this study they were "all the time" (5); "most of the time" (4); "more often than not" (3); "occasionally" (2); "rarely" (1); "never" (0). For the item, "Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?", the Spanier answer categories and codes are "all of them" (4); "most of them" (3); "some of them" (2); "very few of them" (1); "none of them" (0). In this study they were "all of the time" (5); "most of the time" (4); "more often than not" (3); "occasionally" (2); "rarely" (1); "never" (0). In order to render the scoring for the DAS as used in this study exactly comparable to that suggested by Spanier, scores were combined as follows: for the item on kissing, "all the time" was recoded as 4, and "most of the time" and "more often than not" were each recoded as 3. For the item on outside interests, "all the time" was recoded as 4, and "most of the time" and "more often than not" were each recoded as 3.



Reliability and validity. The DAS has been demonstrated to have adequate reliability and validity. Internal-consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha; total scale reliability was found to be .96 (Spanier, 1976: 24). Criterion-related validity was evaluated by administering the scale to a married sample of 218 persons and a divorced sample of 94 persons. For each item, the divorced sample differed significantly from the married sample ( $p < .001$ ) using a t-test for assessing differences between sample means. In addition, the mean total scale scores for the married and divorced samples were 114.8 and 70.7 respectively ( $p < .001$ ). Construct validity was established by testing the association between the DAS and the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale, a well-accepted measure of marital quality. The correlation between these scales was .86 among married respondents and .88 among divorced respondents (Spanier, 1976: 23).

Premarital Cohabitation

Included in the survey instrument was a series of questions designed to assess the extent of cohabitation prior to marriage and the totality of involvement experienced by the cohabiting couple.

Extent of cohabitation. One way to tap, on a questionnaire, whether or not a couple has cohabited premaritally is to simply ask if couples have ever "lived together" before marriage (see, for example, Bower and Christopherson, 1977; Bentler and Newcomb, 1978; Jacques and Chason, 1979).

However, without further clarification it is possible to have a wide range of interpretation concerning exactly what living together means. The procedure used on this instrument was to provide a technical definition of cohabitation as an anchoring point to ensure a uniform understanding of the term "living together" among all respondents, an understanding that would also be congruent with the concept intended by the researcher.

The delimiting question on cohabitation was: "These days many couples live together for a while before getting married. By 'living together' we mean to have shared a room or residence for at least 4 nights per week for at least 3 consecutive months with your current spouse prior to marriage. According to this definition, did you and your current spouse live together before getting married?" The respondent was then told to circle one of the following answers: "my spouse and I did not live together at any time before getting married"; "my spouse and I lived together before getting married, but not long enough or often enough to qualify for this definition"; "my spouse and I lived together before getting married, according to this definition." Respondents who circled either of the last two answers (cohabitators) were then asked how long (in months) they lived together prior to marriage; and whether they stayed in the same residence "all the time," "4-6 days per week," or "3 days per week or less."

Totality of involvement during cohabitation. Several questions were asked of cohabitators to assess what may be referred to as the "totality" of involvement during cohabitation. This variable was conceptualized as the degree to which the cohabiting experience simulated the domiciliary and economic arrangements of marriage. Cohabitators were asked: "Did anyone else live with you and your spouse-to-be at this time?" Those who answered "yes" were asked to specify whether these third parties were male adults, female adults, or minor children. Cohabitators were asked if either of the partners had maintained an additional residence during cohabitation. A question was included concerning common ownership of movable or nonmovable items: "Did you and your spouse-to-be own any of the following in common while you were living together?"; followed by an enumeration of possible items such as house, condominium, land, furniture, small business, and so forth. Cohabitators were also asked if, during cohabitation, they and their partners had had a joint checking or savings account, had listed the other as beneficiary of a will or insurance policy, or had gone on vacations together.

Happiness during cohabitation. A question was asked of all cohabitators to tap perceived happiness during the living-together period: "How happy a couple were you when you were living together unmarried?" Answers were in the form of a continuum ranging from "extremely unhappy" to "perfect."

### Marital Communication

In order to measure the quality of communication within the marriage, an abbreviated version of the Primary Communication Inventory (Locke et al., 1956; Navran, 1967) was used. This instrument was developed to measure the level of communication in marriage, as perceived by each partner. It consists of 25 items, 7 dealing with nonverbal communication and 18 dealing with verbal communication, which assess a person's perception of how well he or she communicates with the spouse. In this study, only those twelve items were included which have been found to significantly discriminate happily married husbands and wives from unhappily married husbands and wives (Navran, 1967: 180). Example items are: "Does your spouse adjust what he (she) says and how he (she) says it to the way you seem to feel at the moment?"; and "Can your spouse tell what kind of day you have had without asking?" The response format for all items is "very frequently," "frequently," "occasionally," "seldom," "never."

### Decision Making

The mode of decision making within the marriage was measured by the Centers, Raven, and Rodriguez decision-making index (Centers et al., 1971: 266), which, in turn, is an expanded form of the Blood and Wolfe index (Blood and Wolfe, 1960: 19-20). The Centers instrument consists of 14 decision areas which purport to be a representative sampling of the universe of decisions normally made by married couples. The directions and response format for the index

were slightly modified for the present research. Couples were asked: "In every family decisions must be made regarding such things as where the family will live, and so on. Consider the following list of decision areas, and for each one indicate how the final decision is arrived at in your marriage."

The decision areas were (1) what people to invite to the house or go out with, (2) how to decorate or furnish the house, (3) which TV or radio program to tune in, (4) what the family will have for dinner, (5) what type of clothes the husband will buy, (6) what types of clothes the wife will buy, (7) what car to get, (8) whether or not to buy life insurance, (9) what house or apartment to take, (10) what job the husband should take, (11) whether or not the wife should go to work or quit work, (12) how much money the family can afford to spend per week on food, (13) what doctor to have when someone is sick, and (14) where to go on vacation. Following each decision area, the choices were husband decides without talking to wife; husband decides after talking to wife; husband and wife decide together; wife decides after talking to husband; wife decides without talking to husband.

This instrument makes possible more than one way of classifying the balance of power in the marriage. Scores can be computed to indicate either the husband's or wife's mean power across all 14 decision areas. Or, account can simultaneously be taken of both (a) the overall

decision-making score (ranging from 0-56, with 56 representing complete husband dominance); and (b) the number of decision areas for which a response of "husband and wife decide together" is chosen (i.e., power is equally shared). The latter method takes account of the fact that authority relationships may differ from couple to couple in at least two respects: the extent of the ranges of authority of husband and wife and the extent of the shared range of authority.

Using the scheme, a fourfold classification of power distribution within the marriage is developed: (1) husband dominant, in which the husband's range of authority is considerably greater than that of his wife; (2) wife dominant, in which the wife's range of authority is considerably greater than that of her husband; (3) syncratic, in which there is nearly a balance of relative authority and the shared range is equal to or greater than the combined ranges of husband and wife; and (4) autonomic, in which there is an approximate balance of relative authority, but the husband's and wife's ranges together are greater than the shared range (Centers et al., 1971: 270).

#### Sex-Role Attitude Scale

In order to assess the degree of liberalism or conservatism of respondents with regard to marital roles, the Osmond-Martin Sex-Role Attitudes Scale (Osmond and Martin, 1975) was included in the questionnaire. The SRA incorporates two major facets of sex-role attitudes: equality versus inequality of the sexes, and sex-role typing versus

nontyping of roles according to sex. The instrument makes possible classification of respondents' attitudes toward sex roles on a continuum ranging from "modern" on the one end to "traditional" on the other.

A modern attitude would favor equality of the sexes in terms of rights and power, and would be characterized by "flexible and dynamic transcendence of sex-role constraints" (Osmond and Martin, 1975: 745). In other words, for the person with a modern attitude, sex would no longer be a requisite characteristic for the occupancy of social positions or for the performance of social roles. A traditional attitude would favor greater rights and power for males, and would be characterized by polar, dichotomous conceptions of the nature and roles of men versus women (Osmond and Martin, 1975: 745).

The SRA consists of 32 statements regarding male and female roles. While the scale supposedly taps a single theoretical dimension, modern to traditional sex roles, items are presented in terms of four general areas: (1) familial roles of females and males; (2) extrafamilial roles of each sex; (3) stereotypes of male/female characteristics and behaviors; and (4) social change as related to sex roles. Sample items are "a man's self-esteem is severely injured if his wife makes more money than he does"; and "to a great extent, women are less able to make a career commitment than men are." For each statement, respondents are given the

answer choices: "strongly disagree," "disagree," "no opinion," "agree," "strongly agree."

Reliability and validity. Reliability of the SRA has been established through a Likert-scaling item analysis (Osmond and Martin, 1975: 746). Resulting t-tests showed that 31 of the 32 items discriminated between the top and bottom quartiles of a random sample of undergraduates, with associated probabilities of .001 or less.<sup>3</sup> The reliability coefficient of the scale with the nondiscriminating item deleted was .88, as measured by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Osmond and Martin, 1975: 746).

Evidence for validity of the scale was provided by a significant association ( $p < .001$ ) in the predicted direction between responses to 30 of the items and two questionnaire items from the Osmond and Martin survey: (1) "How great a need do you feel there is to 'do something' about sexism in our society?" and (2) "To what extent do you feel that the 'social roles of men and women in the modern world' should be a vital issue of concern to most people in our society?" (Osmond and Martin, 1975: 746).

#### Other Survey Items

Marital permanence ideology. The following question was asked in order to tap the degree to which respondents adhere to an ideology of marital permanence: "Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the

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<sup>3</sup>The one item which did not so discriminate was not included in the scale as used in the present study.



following statement: No matter how much trouble a husband and wife are having getting along, the best thing to do is to stay married and try to work out their problems." Answer choices were "strongly agree," "agree," "undecided," "disagree," "strongly disagree."

Church attendance. In order to ascertain the respondent's level of formal religious activity, the following question was asked: "How often did you attend religious services during the past year?", followed by response choices of "not at all," "a few times," "about once a month," "about two to three times a month," "about once a week," "more than once a week."

Sociodemographic items. Finally, a series of relevant sociodemographic questions were included: respondent's current marital status, sex, age, educational attainment, occupation, father's occupation, mother's occupation, religious preference, prior marital history, and presence of minor children in the couple's household. A copy of the survey instrument is to be found in Appendix A of this report.

#### Data Collection

Questionnaire format. The packaging of the survey instrument for mailout was guided by the belief that a maximum response rate would be achieved if questionnaires had the appearance of being relatively short and easy to complete. It was also considered desirable to avoid the appearance of bulk which is inevitable when questionnaires of several pages and manilla return envelopes are used. Toward this

end, questionnaires were photoreduced and printed on 8 1/2" by 11" sheets of plain white paper. When folded double and trimmed, the final product was a 5 1/2" by 8", 16-page questionnaire booklet. The front cover of the booklet contained a brief description of the major purpose of the study, assurances of respondent anonymity, and detailed instructions for completion of the questionnaire. The actual questionnaire items began on page two and ended on page fifteen; items were printed on both sides of each page. There were no questions on the back cover of the booklet; this page was reserved for respondents' comments.

Questionnaires were designed to achieve maximum clarity of presentation and minimum appearance of length. In order to accomplish this, code numbers for answer categories and page numbers, in general, were excluded from the instrument. Also, individual questions or statements which were components of the major scales and indexes of the questionnaire were lettered, rather than numbered. The overall appearance was a questionnaire booklet in which the respondent would find it difficult to estimate the number of individual questions contained, or the overall length of the questionnaire.

Mailout procedure. The initial mailout package consisted of two questionnaires, a cover letter, and a prepaid return envelope. These were sent out to all 594 couples in the sample on October 1, 1980. One week later, a postcard follow-up was sent to all couples in the sample. This served as a thank-you note to those who had already returned

their questionnaires and as a reminder to those who had not. Three weeks after the initial mailout, a package containing a second cover letter plus replacement questionnaires was mailed to each couple in the sample who had not yet responded. Six weeks after the initial mailout, a final postcard remainder was sent to all nonresponding couples (i.e., those couples among whom not even one spouse had returned a questionnaire). Copies of all cover letters and postcards can be found in appendices B, C, D, and E.

The TDM format calls for the fourth mailing to consist of a cover letter plus replacement questionnaires, sent to all nonrespondents by certified mail. This procedure was modified in the present study by sending a postcard reminder instead. The relatively low rate of return after the third mailing prompted this modification. It was felt then that the potential yield in returns to be gained by the former method would not be high enough to warrant the cost of certified mail. Also, the various mailings were beginning to generate respondent hostility in the form of irate and threatening phone calls. Therefore, a final nonthreatening postcard was believed to be the best and most efficient form of appeal for the fourth mailout.

Final response rate. A total of 594 pairs of questionnaires were mailed out. Completed questionnaires were received from 310 couples. Of these, there were 287 couples from whom both husband's and wife's questionnaires were received; 16 more questionnaires were received from wives

only, and 6 additional questionnaires were received from husbands only. There was one couple whose questionnaires were unusable because they were not officially part of the sample (questionnaires were sent to the wrong name). This made a total of 596 usable questionnaires. Of the remaining 284 couples, there were 72 for whom questionnaires were undeliverable either because the couple had moved and left no forwarding address, or the forwarding address had expired. This left 212 couples who could be properly designated as nonrespondents. Therefore, the final response rate was 57 percent  $(596 / (309 + 212) \times 2)$ ; that is, completed questionnaires were returned from 57 percent of the individuals in the sample who received them.

Estimating the extent of collusion. Although the instructions for questionnaire completion specified that spouses were not to discuss questionnaire items with each other prior to returning their forms, the possibility of husband-wife collusion is always a potential drawback to mail surveys of married couples. In order to estimate the extent of this collusion, an attempt was made to contact all couples from whom both husband's and wife's questionnaires were received. Respondents with long-distance numbers were not called, due to the expense involved.

Over the telephone, respondents were first thanked for their participation, and then asked the following question: "Although the instructions said not to discuss the items with your spouse until after the questionnaires were

returned, we are not sure if this is a reasonable request to make of couples in this type of survey. Did you find it at all difficult to keep from discussing these questions with your spouse while you were answering them?" Respondents' answers were coded as falling into one of the following categories: (1) did not discuss at all or did not discuss until after questionnaires were returned; (2) discussed or compared answers after questionnaires were filled out but did not change any responses; (3) discussed or compared answers afterwards; either or both spouses changed answers; (4) filled out questionnaires together or discussed items before answering; (5) other form of collusion (e.g., "my wife read me the questions, I told her my answers, and she marked them on my form," and so forth).

#### Summary

To achieve the major goal of the present study, an assessment of the relationship between premarital cohabitation and subsequent marital quality, it was decided that a cross-sectional survey of recently-married couples would be the most appropriate overall design. Utilizing Florida Marriage Records on file in Gainesville, Florida, a sampling frame was developed consisting of all couples who married between October 6, 1978, and October 8, 1979, among whom both partners were white, the bride was at least 20 years old, and neither spouse was older than 45 at the time of marriage. Employing several sources to locate current addresses for these couples resulted in the selection of 594

of the 1,112 couples on the sampling frame for inclusion in the final sample.

A questionnaire was developed to gather data on several variables pertinent to the research question. Indexes or scales included in the questionnaire were the Dyadic Adjustment scale, the Primary Communication Inventory, the Centers and Raven Decision-making Index, the Osmond-Martin Sex-role Attitudes Scale, a series of questions on premarital cohabitation, and other attitudinal and sociodemographic items.

Following the Total Design Method for mail surveys suggested by Dillman (1978), questionnaires were photoreduced and printed in the form of 5 1/2" by 8" booklets. A series of four mailings was initiated on October 1, 1980, with initial questionnaire packets sent out to all 594 couples in the sample. Completed questionnaires were returned from 57 percent of the individuals in the sample who received them. The majority of questionnaires consisted of returns from both spouses. An attempt was made to call back all respondents with local telephone numbers in order to ascertain the extent of husband-wife collusion on the answering of survey items.

## CHAPTER FOUR CHARACTERISTICS AND WEIGHTING OF THE SAMPLE

In this chapter, consideration is given both to the demographic and the attitudinal attributes of the sample in order to indicate the kinds of couples to whom the study findings may be most reasonably applied. Given the sensitive nature of the study, and the limited resources available to the researcher, probability sampling was not thought to be a feasible sampling procedure. Hence, it is then necessary for the researcher to specify the probable characteristics of a population of couples about whom inferences will be made based on the results of the study.

### Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

An examination of sample characteristics reveals that the sample is young, highly-educated, and white-collar, with most couples residing in Gainesville, and with the majority of husbands and wives being in their first marriages. Clearly, many of the biases that were expected to hold in the sample were, in fact, found.

### Sex Distribution

There are about equal numbers of husbands and wives responding to the questionnaire, with slightly more wives responding. Table 4-1 shows the breakdown of husband and wife participation in the study. Three hundred three wives and 293 husbands comprise the sample, or 50.8 percent wives,

TABLE 4-1. PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

Participation Category	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Questionnaires Returned by Husbands Only	1.9	( 6)
Questionnaires Returned by Wives Only	5.2	( 16)
Questionnaires Returned by Both Partners	<u>92.9</u>	<u>(287)</u>
Total	100.0	(309)

and 49.2 percent husbands. There were more cases where only the wife responded than where only the husband responded.

#### Geographic Location

Table 4-2 presents data concerning location and mobility of sample couples. Most of the sample couples were residing in the City of Gainesville at the time that they applied for a marriage license. Fully 79.3 percent of grooms' addresses listed on the marriage certificate were Gainesville addresses. (Brides' addresses are not listed in full on Florida marriage records, hence they were not able to be evaluated.) At the time that the sample was selected, 82.2 percent of all sample couples had Gainesville addresses, according to the sources consulted to locate the couples. In addition, of all those sample couples who requested a copy of the study results, 62.9 percent were still residing in Gainesville.

Table 4-2 also shows the degree of geographic mobility demonstrated by sample couples during the time between application for a marriage license and returning their completed questionnaires. Some 31.7 percent of couples kept



TABLE 4-2. LOCATION OF SAMPLE COUPLES BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE STUDY.

<u>Percent in Each Category (N)</u>					
	<u>Gaines- ville</u>	<u>Other Alachua</u>	<u>Other Florida</u>	<u>Out of State</u>	<u>Total</u>
Groom's Address on Marriage Certificate	79.3 (245)	12.0 (37)	7.4 (23)	1.3 (4)	100 (309)
Mailing Address from Tel- ephone, Student, or City Directory	82.2 (254)	9.4 (29)	6.8 (21)	1.6 (5)	100 (309)
Return Address on Returned Question- naires	62.9 (139)	10.9 (24)	13.6 (30)	12.7 (28)	100.1 (221)*
	<u>No Change of Address</u>	<u>Change from Marriage to Mailing Address</u>	<u>Change from Mail- ing to Return Ad.</u>	<u>Change from Marr. to Mail to Ret.</u>	
Mobility	31.7(70)	18.1(40)	37.1(82)	13.1(29)	
Total					100 (221)*

\*Eighty-eight couples did not request a copy of the study results, and therefore did not provide a return address.

the same address throughout, while 18.1 percent changed addresses only between application for a license and the time of the mailout, and 37.1 percent changed addresses only between the time of the mailout and the return of their questionnaires. Thirteen percent of couples changed addresses twice in this period. Mobility data are not available for 28.5 percent of the sample couples.

#### Religious Preference and Church Attendance

From Table 4-3 it can be seen that more respondents list Protestant as their religious preference than any other category, with 37.8 percent of husbands and 44.7 percent of wives falling into this category. Catholics comprise the next largest single religious group, with 10.8 percent of husbands and 15 percent of wives falling into this category. About 2 percent of the sample is Jewish. A fairly large proportion of respondents, 29.9 percent of husbands and 20.3 percent of wives, list their religious preference as "none." Nineteen percent of husbands and 18 percent of wives list their religious preference as "other."

There is a considerable range of frequency of attendance at church represented in this sample. Among husbands, 42.4 percent do not attend church at all, while 9.7 percent attend church more than once a week. Fewer wives are non-attenders at church: 37.7 percent do not attend church while 9.9 percent attend more than once a week.

TABLE 4-3. RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE.

	Husbands		Wives	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Religious Preference				
None	29.9	( 86)	20.3	( 61)
Catholic	10.8	( 31)	15.0	( 45)
Protestant	37.8	(109)	44.7	(134)
Jewish	2.1	( 6)	2.0	( 6)
Other	<u>19.4</u>	<u>( 56)</u>	<u>18.0</u>	<u>( 54)</u>
Total	100.0	(288)	100.0	(300)
Church Attendance				
Not at all	42.4	(122)	37.7	(114)
A few times	25.3	( 73)	29.8	( 90)
Once a month	7.6	( 22)	4.6	( 14)
2-3 times per month	5.9	( 17)	6.3	( 19)
Once a week	9.0	( 26)	11.6	( 35)
More than once a week	<u>9.7</u>	<u>( 28)</u>	<u>9.9</u>	<u>( 30)</u>
Total	99.9	(288)	99.9	(302)

#### Presence of Minor Children in the Household

Table 4-4 shows the percent of sample couples who had minor children present in their households at the time of the study. The majority of couples, 70.5 percent, did not have any minor children, while 20.9 percent had one child living with them, and 8.6 percent had two or more children.

TABLE 4-4. PRESENCE OF MINOR CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD  
(BASED ON WIVES' RESPONSES).

Presence of Minor Children	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
No children	70.5	(213)
One child	20.9	( 63)
Two children	3.0	( 9)
Three children	3.3	( 10)
Four children	<u>2.3</u>	<u>( 7)</u>
Total	100.0	(302)

#### Marital Histories of Respondents

The majority of sample couples, 74.8 percent, were married by religious officials. Most of the marriages in this sample are first marriages for the husband (71.8 percent of husbands) and the wife (71.5 percent of wives). On the other hand, 28.2 percent of husbands were in their second, third, or fourth marriages, and 28.5 percent of wives were in their second, third, fourth, or fifth marriages (Table 4-5). Virtually all husbands and wives who had had a prior marriage had that prior marriage terminated by divorce. Table 4-6 shows the congruence between husband's and wife's marital histories. In 60.5 percent of the marriages, both husband and wife were in their first marriage. For 11.3 percent, the husband was in his first marriage but the wife had been married at least once before. For 11 percent, the wife was in her first marriage but the husband had been

TABLE 4-5. NUMBER OF THIS MARRIAGE FOR SAMPLE HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

Number of This Marriage	Husbands		Wives	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
First Marriage	71.8	(222)	71.5	(221)
Second Marriage	23.9	( 74)	21.4	( 66)
Third Marriage	3.6	( 11)	5.2	( 16)
Fourth Marriage	.6	( 2)	1.6	( 5)
Fifth Marriage	<u>0.0</u>	<u>( 0)</u>	<u>.3</u>	<u>( 1)</u>
Total	99.9	(309)	100.0	(309)

TABLE 4-6. CONGRUENCE BETWEEN HUSBAND'S AND WIFE'S MARITAL HISTORIES.

	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Husband and Wife Both in First Marriage	60.5	(187)
Wife Married More Than Once	11.3	( 35)
Husband Married More Than Once	11.0	( 34)
Both Married More Than Once	<u>17.2</u>	<u>( 53)</u>
Total	100.0	(309)

married at least once before. In 17.2 percent of marriages, both partners had been married at least once before.

#### Ages of Respondents

Median age at marriage for husbands is 25.9 and, for wives, is 23.8. These ages are slightly older than the national median ages at marriage for men and women. Median

age at the time of the study was 27.3 for husbands and 25.3 for wives.

In 15.2 percent of marriages, husband and wife are the same age, while the husband is older in 62.8 percent of marriages, and the wife is older among 22 percent of sample couples. The absolute age difference is, however, not very large. On average, mean absolute difference in husband-wife ages at marriage is only about 3 years. The average couple, at the time of the study, had been married for about a year and five months.

#### Educational and Occupational Characteristics

As Table 4-7 shows, both husbands and wives in the sample are characterized by fairly high levels of educational attainment. Fully 53.5 percent of husbands and 47.4 percent

TABLE 4-7. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE SAMPLE IN YEARS OF FORMAL SCHOOLING COMPLETED.

Education Completed	Husbands		Wives	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
High School or Less	12.2	( 35)	18.5	( 56)
Some College	34.3	( 99)	34.1	(103)
Completed College	19.8	( 57)	28.2	( 85)
Some Graduate Work	12.9	( 37)	7.6	( 23)
Graduate Degree	20.8	( 60)	11.6	( 35)
Total	100.0	(288)	100.0	(302)

of wives have attained at least a bachelor's degree. Median educational attainment for husbands is 15.7 years, or 3.7 years of college. For wives, the corresponding figure is 15.2 years, or 3.2 years of college. These levels are about

three years higher than the average educational attainment levels for men and women in the United States. This is most likely due to the fact that the Gainesville area is dominated by a large state university.

Along with high educational attainment, the sample is also characterized by a predominance of white-collar occupations. Tables 4-8 and 4-9 present the distribution of occupations for husbands and wives and for husbands' and wives' fathers, according to the major categories delineated by the U. S. Bureau of the Census (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1970), plus two additional categories: "military personnel" and "student." Counting as white-collar occupations the categories "professional-technical," "managers and administrators," "sales," and "clerical," 66.7 percent of husbands' occupations and 73.1 percent of wives' occupations can be classified as white-collar. Conversely, only 17.7 percent of husbands and 9.8 percent of wives can be reliably classified as blue-collar, excluding those who are unemployed, housewives, students, or military personnel.

Somewhat more variation can be seen in occupations of respondents' fathers, particularly with respect to the white-collar, blue-collar dichotomy (Table 4-9). For husbands' fathers, 63.2 percent are in white-collar occupations and 27.8 percent are in blue-collar occupations. Among wives' fathers, 60.4 percent are in white-collar occupations and 29.7 percent are in blue-collar occupations. Nevertheless, the sample is substantially biased toward the

TABLE 4-8. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE.

Occupational Category	Husbands		Wives	
	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)
Professional and Technical Personnel	42.4	(120)	39.1	(115)
Managers and Administrators	18.0	( 51)	9.2	( 27)
Sales Personnel	3.5	( 10)	2.4	( 7)
Clerical Personnel	2.8	( 8)	22.4	( 66)
Craftsmen	11.3	( 32)	1.7	( 5)
Operatives	.7	( 2)	.7	( 2)
Transport Equipment Operatives	.7	( 2)	.7	( 2)
Laborers	1.1	( 3)	.3	( 1)
Farmers	1.1	( 3)	.3	( 1)
Service Workers	2.8	( 8)	6.1	( 18)
Military Personnel	.4	( 1)	0.0	( 0)
Housewives	0.0	( 0)	9.9	( 29)
Students	14.8	( 42)	5.4	( 16)
Unemployed	.4	( 1)	1.7	( 5)
Total	100.0	( 283)	99.9	( 294)



TABLE 4-9. DISTRIBUTION OF FATHERS' OCCUPATIONS FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES IN THE SAMPLE.

Occupational Category	Husbands		Wives	
	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)
Professional and Technical Personnel	28.8	( 79)	27.2	( 77)
Managers and Administrators	24.5	( 67)	21.9	( 62)
Sales Personnel	7.3	( 20)	9.5	( 27)
Clerical Personnel	2.6	( 7)	1.8	( 5)
Craftsmen	13.1	( 36)	16.6	( 47)
Operatives	1.1	( 3)	1.8	( 5)
Transport Equipment Operatives	3.3	( 9)	2.1	( 6)
Laborers	2.2	( 6)	3.2	( 9)
Farmers	5.5	( 15)	2.5	( 7)
Service Workers	2.6	( 7)	3.9	( 11)
Military Personnel	9.1	( 25)	9.5	( 27)
Total	100.1	( 274)	100.0	( 283)

white-collar occupational group, with the majority of respondents falling into that category.

Although Gainesville is predominantly a university town, the sample is by no means dominated by students. Only about 15 percent of husbands and 5 percent of wives list their occupations as "student."

The Living-Together Experience Among  
Prior-Cohabiting Couples

All husbands and wives who cohabited before marriage were asked the same set of questions concerning the living-together experience. In order to assess the extent of husband-wife agreement on these factual items, a difference score was computed by subtracting the wife's coded response from the husband's coded response. When each partner gave the same response, this score was zero. When their responses diverged, this score was some other positive or negative number. Husband-wife agreement was examined for all couples except those among whom either or both partners maintained that cohabitation did not occur. (Out of the entire sample, there were 5 couples among whom one partner said that cohabitation occurred while the other partner maintained that cohabitation did not occur.)

Table 4-10 presents each factual question asked and the extent of agreement on each question as measured by the percentage of zero difference scores among all couples wherein both partners answered the question. With the exception of two items, agreement is generally quite high, ranging between 80.6 and 100 percent. The two items on which there is

TABLE 4-10. HUSBAND-WIFE AGREEMENT ON FACTUAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE COHABITATION EXPERIENCE.

Question	Percent Who		
	Agree	Disagree	Total
Total Number of Months That the Couple Cohabited	66.0	37.0	100.0
Number of Days Per Week that the Couple Resided Together	87.2	12.8	100.0
Presence of Third Parties	88.7	11.3	100.0
Maintaining an Additional Residence	83.5	16.5	100.0
Total Number of Items Owned in Common	61.0	39.0	100.0
Whether the Following Specific Items Were Owned in Common:			
House	96.4	3.6	100.0
Condominium	100.0	0.0	100.0
Mobile Home	97.1	2.9	100.0
Camper or Recreational Vehicle	99.4	.6	100.0
Boat	96.4	3.6	100.0
Land	98.8	1.2	100.0
Vacation Home	99.4	.6	100.0
Automobile or Truck	83.6	16.4	100.0
Motorcycle	96.4	3.6	100.0
Furniture	80.6	19.4	100.0
TV or Stereo Equipment	80.6	19.4	100.0
Musical Instruments	97.0	3.0	100.0
Works of Art	91.2	8.8	100.0
Other Property	89.2	10.8	100.0
Maintaining a Joint Checking or Savings Account	93.3	6.7	100.0
Listing Each Other as Beneficiary of a Will or Insurance Policy	84.1	15.9	100.0
Taking Vacations Together	91.3	8.7	100.0

least agreement are the total numbers of months that the couple cohabited and the total number of items that were owned in common (66 and 61 percent, respectively). However, if, for the total number of months that the couple cohabited, one considers the percentage of couples whose responses are within two months of each other, agreement on this item increases to 86 percent. Similarly, if one considers the percentage of couples whose responses to the question concerning the total number of items owned in common is within one item of each other, agreement increases to 83.1 percent.

Greatest agreement is on whether or not specific items were owned in common during cohabitation, with the exception of ownership of an automobile or truck, furniture, and TV or stereo equipment. Lowest agreement is found on the issue of common ownership of these latter items, with only 80.6 percent of couples agreeing on whether or not they owned furniture, a TV, or stereo equipment and only 83.6 percent of couples agreeing on whether or not they owned an automobile or truck. Surprisingly, only 83.5 percent of couples agreed on whether or not an additional residence was maintained during cohabitation and only 84.1 percent agreed on whether or not one or both spouses was listed as beneficiary of a will or insurance policy.

On the whole, however, husband-wife agreement on these items was fairly high, considering that respondents were being asked to accurately recall details of an experience

that had happened one to two years back. Average agreement across all items was 89.9 percent. Cases in which husbands and wives do not provide the same responses are possibly due to differential accuracy of recall, intentional falsification of answers on the part of one or both partners, unequal knowledge of the situation on the part of one or the other partner, or a combination of these phenomena. Since it is not possible to discern which of these is the case, it was decided to simply utilize one partner's information throughout. Of the two, the wife's responses were chosen, primarily because more wives answered the questionnaires, and, therefore, the wife data are more complete. Hence, all data on cohabitation are based on wives' responses.

#### Frequency of Living Together

All individuals were given a definition of "living together" on the questionnaire: ". . .to have shared a room or residence for at least 4 nights per week for at least 3 consecutive months with your current spouse prior to marriage." Respondents were then asked to indicate whether, according to this definition, (a) they did not live together at all, (b) they lived together before marriage, but not long enough or often enough to qualify for this definition, or (c) they lived together according to this definition. In addition, they were asked to specify exactly how many months they lived together before marriage and to indicate whether they stayed in the same residence all the time, 4-6 days per week, or 3 days per week or less. Classification of

cohabiting category was thus based on wives' responses to the latter two questions. Wives who claimed not to have lived together at all and left all subsequent questions blank, were classified as not living together at all. Those who indicated either living together for less than 3 months or less than 4-6 days per week or both, were classified in category 2 in the table, and, in order to be classified in category 3, wives had to indicate at least 3 months cohabitation for at least 4-6 days per week or longer. In all, 210 couples, or approximately 70 percent of the sample, lived together for at least some period of time before marrying (Table 4-11).

TABLE 4-11. FREQUENCY OF COHABITATION FOR SAMPLE COUPLES.

Cohabitation Category	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Did Not Live Together at all	30.0	( 90)
Lived Together Less Than 3 Months or Less Than 4 Nights Per Week	12.7	( 38)
Lived Together at Least 3 Months and at Least 4 Nights Per Week	<u>57.3</u>	<u>(172)</u>
Total	100.0	(300)

Living and Financial Arrangements of  
Cohabiting Couples

The median number of months' cohabitation for all couples who lived together for any time prior to marriage is 10.75. Thus, half of the couples who lived together did so for less than 11 months before getting married. However, there is a substantial degree of variation in the length of

time couples cohabited, ranging from less than one month (10 couples) to 11 years (2 couples).

By far, the majority of cohabitators, 75.9 percent, resided together continuously during the period of time that they lived together. As Table 4-12 shows, only a total of about 24 percent, or one-quarter, of cohabiting couples stayed together less than 7 days per week. Just over half,

TABLE 4-12. CONTINUOUSNESS OF COHABITATION DURING COHABITION PERIOD.

Category	Percent	(N)
Three Days Per Week or Less	9.9	( 21)
Four to Six Days Per Week	14.2	( 30)
All the Time	75.9	(161)
Total	100.0	(212)

or 51 percent, of cohabitators lived in arrangements including one or more "third parties," either male roommates, female roommates, or minor children. As is detailed in Table 4-13, the most common third party was one other male or one other female, or both, that is, one other couple, since, in some cases, respondents reported both a male and a female roommate. About 29 percent of the 107 cohabitators reporting third parties lived with minor children before getting married; thus, there were minor children involved in about 15 percent of all cohabiting arrangements.

Apparently, a smaller proportion of cohabiting arrangements among study couples included children than is the case

TABLE 4-13. DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD PARTIES AMONG COHABITORS REPORTING THIRD PARTIES.

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Category	Percent	(N)*
One Male Roommate	34.9	(37)
Two Male Roommates	8.5	( 9)
Three Male Roommates	.9	( 1)
One Female Roommate	35.8	(38)
Two Female Roommates	13.2	(14)
One Child	13.2	(14)
Two Children	11.2	(12)
Three Children	2.8	( 3)
Four Children	1.9	( 2)

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\*No totals are reported because these are overlapping categories.

nationwide. According to the 1980 Census, 27.2 percent of all unmarried-couple households contain children under 15 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981: Table F).

The majority of couples, 59.8 percent, did not maintain an additional residence, aside from the one in which they were living, during the cohabiting period.

Cohabitors were presented with a list of 14 categories of movable or nonmovable goods and were asked to indicate which, if any, of these they owned in common while they were living together. Items ranged from relatively minor, such as TV or stereo equipment, to relatively major, such as a house or condominium. An "other" category was also provided. As can be seen in Table 4-14, the majority of cohabitors,



54.8 percent, did not own any property in common during the cohabiting period. The mean number of items owned in common

TABLE 4-14. PROPERTY OWNED IN COMMON DURING COHABITATION.

Category	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)*</u>
No Property in Common	54.8	(115)
Two or Fewer Items in Common	77.6	(163)
Three to Seven Items in Common	22.4	( 47)
Owned House or Condominium	7.6	( 16)

\*No totals are reported because these are overlapping categories.

by all cohabitators is only 1.23. Slightly more than three-quarters, or 77.6 percent, owned only 2 or fewer items in common, and only about a fifth, or 22.4 percent, owned three or more items in common. Of all cohabitators, 7.6 percent owned a house or condominium together while they were cohabiting.

Couples were asked whether they maintained a joint checking or savings account, listed their future spouse as beneficiary of a will or insurance policy, or whether they generally went on vacations together, while they were living together. About three-quarters of cohabiting couples (73.3 percent) did not maintain a joint checking or savings account while they were cohabiting. Similarly, 74.4 percent of cohabiting couples did not, during this time, list one another as beneficiary of a will or insurance policy. On the other hand, most (81.9 percent) of the cohabiting

couples went on vacations together while they were living together.

To summarize, it would appear that the typical cohabiting experience, at least among those relationships that eventuate in marriage, does not represent a truly simulated marriage experience in terms of the kind of material and economic interdependence which characterizes most marriages. In particular, the typical cohabiting couple in this sample, while living together, did not own any property in common, did not maintain a joint checking or savings account, and did not have each other listed as beneficiary of a will or insurance policy. In addition, the typical couple lived with a third party in the same residence, and at least half of these couples married before cohabiting as long as a year.

#### Distribution of Sample Couples on Scales and Indexes Measuring Marital Quality

Tables 4-15 and 4-16 present data describing the distribution of responses of sample husbands and wives to questions which assess the quality of communication, degree of sex-role traditionalism, degree of dyadic adjustment, and mode of decision-making in the marriage.

#### Communication

As can be seen from Table 4-15, perceived quality of communication in marriage is fairly high among both husbands and wives, with wives indicating slightly higher communication. On a scale ranging from 0 to 48, the mean score for husbands is 34.75, and for wives is 36.70.

TABLE 4-15. DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HUSBANDS AND WIVES ON SCALES OF COMMUNICATION, DYADIC ADJUSTMENT, AND SEX-ROLE TRADITIONALISM.

	<u>Scale Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Std. Dev.</u>	<u>Range of Responses</u>	<u>Reliability</u>
Husband's Perceived Communication Quality	0-48	34.8	34.8	5.3	8-48	.72
Wife's Perceived Communication Quality	0-48	36.7	37.4	5.9	9-47	.81
Husband's Sex-Role Traditionalism	0-124	43.6	44.3	12.8	9-86	.88
Wife's Sex-Role Traditionalism	0-124	34.7	33.9	13.5	7-74	.87
Husband's Dyadic Adjustment	0-151	114.9	115.5	12.6	71-145	.89
Wife's Dyadic Adjustment	0-151	117.1	118.0	14.7	50-143	.92

### Sex-Role Attitudes

Couples' mean scores on the Osmond-Martin Sex-Role Attitudes scale indicate that husbands are substantially more traditional than wives in this sample. Mean score for husbands is 43.62, and for wives is 34.68, hence husbands, on average, score 10 points higher in traditionalism than do wives. However, since the scale ranges from 0 (very modern) to 124 (very traditional) both husbands and wives in this sample lean toward the modern end of the scale. This can be seen by comparing these data to responses of men and women from the study by Osmond and Martin on sex-role attitudes. In their sample, overall mean score for men and women combined was 74 (Osmond and Martin, 1975:76). In this sample, the overall mean is 39.15. Clearly, sample couples in this study are substantially more modern in regard to sex-role attitudes than those in Osmond and Martin's study.

### Dyadic Adjustment

Table 4-15 shows the mean, median, standard deviation, scale range, and sample range for husbands' and wives' scores on the dyadic adjustment scale. This scale measures the major dependent variable in this study, marital quality. As is evident from the data, couples generally fall into the relatively high-satisfaction end of the scale. The possible range of the scale is 0 to 151; the mean for husbands is 114.92, the mean for wives is slightly higher, at 117.12. These means are both quite close to the mean score on this scale for Spanier's sample of 218 married men and women, in

which the mean for both sexes combined was 114.8. The overall mean for husbands and wives, combined, in the Gainesville study is 116.04. Wives' scores on the scale are more dispersed than husbands' scores, that is, the mean for husbands on the D.A.S. is somewhat more representative of the typical husband's score than the mean for wives on the D.A.S. is representative of the typical wife's score. This can be seen by the fact that the standard deviation for wives' scores is larger than that for husbands' scores. Also, wives' scores have a larger range than do husbands' scores, with wives' scores having a range of 93 (50-143), and husbands' scores having a range of 74 (71-145).

#### Mode of Decision Making

Table 4-16 shows how sample husbands and wives are distributed with respect to perceptions of decision-making authority in the marriage. Classification into categories

TABLE 4-16. DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HUSBANDS AND WIVES ON PERCEIVED DECISION MAKING IN THE MARRIAGE.

<u>Perceived Mode of Decision Making</u>	Husbands		Wives	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Wife-Dominant	2.5	( 7 )	1.7	( 5 )
Husband-Dominant	1.4	( 4 )	1.0	( 3 )
Autonomic	45.2	(127)	44.3	(128)
Syncratic	<u>50.9</u>	<u>(143)</u>	<u>52.9</u>	<u>(153)</u>
Total	100.0	(281)	99.9	(289)

of wife-dominant, husband-dominant, autonomic, and syncratic follows the guidelines articulated by Centers and his associates (1971). Respondents were classified according to a combination of (a) the range of authority of the husband (the RA score), computed by summing the values of the responses across all 14 items; and (b) the degree of shared authority (the DS score), computed by summing the number of items for which the respondent indicated that the decision was made by "both equally."

The RA score had a possible range of 14, where all decisions were made completely by the wife, to 70, where all decisions were made completely by the husband. The DS score had a possible range of 0, where no decisions were made mutually, to 14, where all decisions were made mutually. Following Centers and his colleagues, respondents were classified as wife-dominant if they had an RA score between 14 and 34. They were classified as husband-dominant if they had an RA score between 51 and 70. Respondents having RA scores between 35 and 50 were classified as autonomic if their DS scores were between 0 and 7, and syncratic if their DS scores were between 8 and 14.

It can be seen from the data in Table 4-16 that, compared to the husbands and wives in the Centers study, relatively more of the Gainesville couples are characterized by syncratic decision making and relatively fewer could be classified as autonomic. For example, according to the perceptions of Gainesville husbands, 50.9 percent of their

marriages are characterized by syncratic decision making, compared to only 16 percent in the Centers study. Forty-five percent of Gainesville husbands would be characterized as autonomic, compared to 70 percent of husbands in the Centers study. According to husbands, only a total of about 4 percent of their marriages are either husband- or wife-dominated. Wives' perceptions are very similar to those of their husbands, with 52.9 percent of wives perceiving their marriages as syncratic, 44.3 percent perceiving their marriages as autonomic, and only about 3 percent perceiving their marriages as being either husband- or wife-dominated.

#### Reliability of Scale and Index Scores Among Gainesville Respondents

The index of communication quality, the Osmond-Martin Sex-Role Attitude Scale, and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale were examined, separately for husbands and wives, to assess the degree of reliability possessed by each scale. The decision-making index was not examined for reliability because, unlike the other constructs, the question of who makes decisions in various areas is taken at face value and not used to tap some underlying domain. Hence, decision-making questions were perceived as possessing face validity.

The measure for assessing reliability is Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951), which is available through the SPSS computer software package. Coefficient alpha is one of a family of measures of reliability known as a measure of equivalence. That is, it measures the extent to which two identical instruments, designed to measure the

same construct, would yield correlated responses. Rather than actually administering two separate scales, the researcher usually assesses reliability by correlating one-half of the scale with the other half of the scale. Alpha is interpreted as the average of all possible split-half coefficients that could be computed for a given test (Cronbach, 1951:300). The numerical value of alpha represents the proportion of variation in the observed scores of a test that is true variation in the underlying variable of interest, the remaining proportion, or  $1 - \alpha$ , being measurement error (Hull and Nie, 1981: 249).<sup>1</sup>

For the index of communication quality, alpha was initially .728 for husbands and .814 for wives. One item on this scale had a substantially lower item-to-total correlation than all others, for both husbands and wives. This was the question which asked: "Do you and your spouse use words which have a special meaning not understood by outsiders?". This item was then deleted from the scale, bringing alpha up to .801 for husbands and .824 for wives. Alpha for the

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<sup>1</sup>In practice, the relative proportions of "true score" versus measurement error cannot be determined without relating scale scores for a particular construct to other, independent measures of the same construct, or to other variables which should be related in a particular fashion to the construct in question. These determinations are subsumed under the notions of criterion and construct validity. What the reliability coefficient really tells us is the degree to which we are measuring some trait consistently. Thus, alpha is the proportion of variation in observed scores which is attributable to some systematic and consistent domain. One minus alpha, then, is the proportion due to more-or-less random measurement error.



husbands' sex-role traditionalism scale was .876, and for wives, the figure was .874. These figures are comparable to reliability scores achieved in Osmond and Martin's sample, where alpha was .88 (Osmond and Martin, 1975: 746). For the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, alpha was .894 for husbands and .915 for wives, which, while adequate, are not quite as high as the reliability reported by Spanier for his sample, an alpha of .96 (Spanier, 1976: 24).

Comparison of factors emerging in D.A.S. between current sample and Spanier sample. As a further check on the reliability of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for the current sample, a factor analysis of D.A.S. scores was performed for both husbands and wives using the factor analysis program available in SPSS. Since the results were to be compared with those of Spanier, the current analyses were also performed with oblique rotation. While we found the same major factors to emerge that were found by Spanier, consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, and affectional expression, the factor structure in the current study for both husbands and wives was slightly different. Whereas Spanier found only one consensus factor to emerge, resulting in a factor structure consisting of 4 major factors, in the current study 2 separate consensus factors emerged, resulting in 5 major factors. Items which loaded on consensus factor A and consensus factor B were different for wives than they were for husbands. For husbands, agreement on finances, religion, conventionality, philosophy, in-laws, aims and goals, making

decisions, and career decisions all loaded on consensus factor A, while agreement on recreation, friends, household tasks, and leisure loaded on consensus factor B. For wives, agreement on finances, recreation, friends, conventionality, household tasks, and leisure, and frequency of "getting on each other's nerves" and frequency of engaging in outside interests together all loaded on consensus factor A, while agreement on religion, philosophy, in-laws, aims and goals, making decisions, and career decisions all loaded on consensus factor B. The interpretation, for husbands, of these two separate factors is that factor A represents agreement on major values and attitudes relevant to the relationship, while factor B represents consensus regarding the relatively minor matters of recreation and sharing household tasks. The difference between factors A and B, for the wives, is not as readily interpretable.

In addition, the average intercorrelation of the 4 main factors in Spanier's study was higher than the corresponding intercorrelation of factors in this study, with those intercorrelations being .68 (Spanier 1976:20) and .37, respectively.

#### Evaluating the Effects of Husband-Wife Collusion

Table 4-17 shows the nature and extent of husband-wife collusion on questionnaire items among the 155 couples for whom such data are available. Judging from the collusion rate among these couples, it does not appear that collusion was very extensive in this study. Only 18.7 percent of

TABLE 4-17. HUSBAND-WIFE COLLUSION IN THE STUDY.

Collusion Category	Percent	(N)
No Discussion	27.7	( 43)
Discussion After Questionnaires Completed	53.5	( 83)
Discussion After Questionnaires Completed, One or the Other Partner Changed Answers	4.5	( 7)
Filled Out Questionnaires Together	11.0	( 17)
Other Collusion	3.2	( 5)
Collusion Data Not Available		(154)
Total	99.9	(309)

these couples reported engaging in procedures that could be considered collusion. Only 11 percent of the couples contacted actually filled out their questionnaires together. Fully 81.3 percent of all couples contacted reported no collusion whatsoever.

In order to estimate the effects of husband-wife collusion in the study, it was decided to compare colluding couples with non-colluding couples with respect to responses to selected items in the study. One might reasonably hypothesize that collusion would have two major effects on item response. First, colluding husbands and wives should both alter their responses to questions regarding the quality of their marriages in the direction of greater social desirability. Second, husbands' and wives' responses to questionnaire items should be more highly correlated when there has been collusion compared to when there has been no collusion.

To examine this, colluding husbands and wives were compared to non-colluding husbands and wives on the following: (a) overall distribution of responses to questions concerning marital permanence ideology, happiness during cohabitation, frequency of church attendance, dyadic adjustment, communication quality, sex-role traditionalism, and mode of decision-making; (b) husband-wife correlation of responses to the dyadic adjustment scale, the index of communication quality, the sex-role traditionalism scale, and the index of decision-making style, and husband-wife agreement on the extent of premarital cohabitation.

Regarding overall distribution of responses, only slight differences emerge, for the most part, between colluders and non-colluders. The expected shift in colluders' responses toward social desirability, with the exception of the wife's perception of decision making, did not emerge. On the item concerning marital permanence ideology, 48.2 percent of colluding husbands and 50 percent of colluding wives versus 45.6 percent of non-colluding husbands and 48.8 percent of non-colluding wives agree or strongly agree that "No matter how much trouble a husband and wife are having getting along, the best thing to do is to stay married and try to work out their problems."

Both non-colluding husbands and wives report slightly higher happiness during cohabitation (with a mean happiness rating of 4.1 and 4.0, respectively) than do colluding

husbands and wives (with a mean happiness rating of 3.8 and 3.9, respectively).

Non-colluding husbands and wives report a greater frequency of church attendance than colluding husbands and wives. Twenty-one percent of non-colluding husbands and 22 percent of non-colluding wives versus 13.7 percent of colluding husbands and wives report attending church once a week or more often.

Non-colluding husbands and wives report slightly higher dyadic adjustment (with means of 114.1 and 116.6, respectively) than do colluding husbands and wives (with means of 111.2 and 115.2, respectively). Similarly, non-colluding wives report a slightly higher quality of communication than do colluding wives with means of 37.1 and 36.1, respectively. For husbands, colluders are slightly higher than non-colluders on quality of communication, with means of 35.2 and 34.2, respectively. Both colluding husbands and wives are more modern on the sex-role traditionalism scale (with means of 35.2 and 34.2, respectively) than are non-colluding husbands and wives (with means of 44.9 and 35.5, respectively).

For husbands, there is very little difference in perception of mode of decision making between colluders and non-colluders. For example, 53.6 percent of colluding husbands versus 51.2 percent of non-colluding husbands perceive their marriages to be characterized by syncratic decision making. On the other hand, the largest differences between

colluders versus non-colluders are found in wives' perceptions of decision making, with a larger percentage of colluding wives perceiving their style of decision making in marriage to be syncratic compared to non-colluding wives. For colluding wives, 59.3 percent say their decision making is syncratic and 40.7 percent say it is autonomic. For non-colluding wives, only 46.7 percent say it is syncratic, 51.7 percent say it is autonomic, and .8 percent each say it is husband- or wife dominated.

Regarding the correlation between husbands' and wives' responses to questionnaire items, as expected, correlation of responses was considerably higher among colluders than among non-colluders. The one exception to this was the sex-role traditionalism scale, where the correlation between husbands' and wives' scales among non-colluders was higher, at .58 than was the correlation among colluders (.39).

Among colluders, correlation of husbands' and wives' scores on the dyadic adjustment scale and index of communication quality were .77 and .75, respectively, compared to .53 and .57 for non-colluders. Similarly, there was much greater agreement among colluders as to categorization of the decision-making style in the marriage. Among colluders, only 14.8 percent of couples were not classified in the same category when comparing husbands' and wives' responses. Among non-colluders, 41.9 percent of couples were not classified in the same category. Finally, there is slightly more agreement among colluders as to which cohabitation

category they belong in, compared to non-colluders. Among colluders, 3.6 percent of couples are classified in different categories, compared to 5 percent for the non-colluders.

#### Weighting of the Sample

The final sample of 309 couples does not represent a probability sample of young, recently-married couples. Instead, it represents the couples who chose to respond to this survey among all couples who could be located from a purposive sample of 1,112 young, recently-married couples. In order for the data to be, at least, representative of that aggregate of 1,112 couples, the final sample of 309 was compared to the original aggregate of 1,112 on the descriptive characteristics from the marriage license applications, since these provided some minimal data on all couples, including those who did not respond or could not be located. It was decided that, if the final sample differed significantly from the original aggregate on any of the characteristics, the responses of the final sample would be weighted accordingly.

In order to determine if there were any such significant differences, a regression program was run to predict inclusion into the final sample. That is, participation (versus non-participation) in the study was regressed on the characteristics available for all 1,112 couples: marriage address, marriage official, husband's age at marriage, wife's age at marriage, duration of the marriage in months, age difference between the spouses, and a marital history

variable which represented a cross classification of the number of times previously married for both husband and wife. The marital history variable has 4 categories: both partners in their first marriage; husband in first marriage and wife in second or subsequent marriage; wife in first marriage and husband in second or subsequent marriage; and both partners in their second or subsequent marriage.

Three variables emerged as significant predictors of inclusion in the final sample: marriage address, marriage official, and marital history. Table 4-18 shows the comparison of the original aggregate and the final sample on these variables. The data reveal that, compared to the original 1,112 couples the final sample of 309 couples was more likely to list Gainesville as the groom's address, to have been married by a religious official, and to consist of couples among whom both partners were in their first marriage. For example, 79.3 percent of sample couples listed Gainesville as the groom's address compared to 70.8 percent of the original aggregate. Also, 74.8 percent of sample couples were married by a religious official compared to 65.6 percent of the original aggregate. Finally, 60.5 percent of sample couples consisted of first marriages for both husband and wife, compared to 50.3 percent of the original aggregate.

Weighting was accomplished as follows. A series of eight categories was enumerated representing all possible combinations of the cross classification of marriage address



TABLE 4-18. COMPARISON OF FINAL SAMPLE WITH ORIGINAL AGGREGATE ON MARRYING OFFICIAL, MARRIAGE ADDRESS, AND MARITAL HISTORY.

<u>ORIGINAL AGGREGATE</u>		<u>FINAL SAMPLE</u>	
Marriage Address	<u>Percent</u>		<u>Percent</u>
Gainesville	70.8	Gainesville	79.3
Other Alachua	16.7	Other Alachua	12.0
Other Florida	8.7	Other Florida	7.4
Out of State	<u>3.8</u>	Out of State	<u>1.3</u>
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
Marrying Official			
Religious	65.6	Religious	74.8
Nonreligious	<u>34.4</u>	Nonreligious	<u>25.2</u>
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
Marital History (Congruence between Husband's and Wife's Marital Histories)			
Husband and Wife both in First Marriage	50.3	Husband and Wife both in First Marriage	60.5
Wife Married More than Once	14.7	Wife Married More than Once	11.3
Husband Married More Than Once	12.6	Husband Married More Than Once	11.0
Both Married More than Once	<u>22.5</u>	Both Married More than Once	<u>17.2</u>
Total	100.1	Total	100.0

by marriage official by marital history, where marriage address was coded as "Gainesville" versus other and marital history was coded as "husband and wife both in their first marriage versus other." For example, one possible classification for a couple is the groom listing a Gainesville address on the marriage certificate, the couple having been married by a religious official, and both partners being in their first marriage. A second classification would be the groom listing a Gainesville address, the couple having been married by a nonreligious official, and both partners being in their first marriage. After all such classifications were enumerated, the percentage of couples falling into each classification in the original aggregate was compared to the corresponding distribution for the final sample. Weights were derived by dividing the percentage falling into a particular category in the aggregate by the percentage falling into a particular category in the final sample. The result is a numerical weight representing the degree to which responses in the final sample should be either under- or over-counted in order to accurately represent the distribution of that particular type of couple in the original aggregate. For example, couples in the category "Gainesville address, religious marriage official, both partners in their first marriage" were over-represented in the final sample, hence their responses are under-counted with a weight of .6908. On the other hand, couples in the category "non-Gainesville address, nonreligious marriage official,

both partners in their first marriage" were underrepresented in the final sample, and their responses were accordingly overcounted with a weight of 3.0. All inferential analyses are based on weighted responses.

#### Summary

The final sample of 596 individuals who responded to this study represent 309 young, highly-educated, middle-class married couples. The majority of these couples consist of husbands and wives who had not been married previously. Most couples were residing in Gainesville at the time of marriage. The most frequently-listed religious preference is Protestant, followed by "no religious preference at all," Catholics, and Jews. A wide range of participation in church attendance is represented, all the way from "not at all" to "more than once a week." Approximately 21 percent of couples have minor children living at home.

Seventy percent of the couples lived together for at least some period of time before marrying. Among these cohabitators, the median duration of living together was about 11 months, with the majority of cohabitators residing together continuously during this time. In this sample, the typical living-together experience among those relationships which eventuate in marriage does not represent a truly simulated marital relationship. The average cohabiting couple did not own any property in common, did not maintain a joint checking or savings account, and did not have each other listed as beneficiary of a will or insurance policy.

On average, sample couples scored high on quality of communication perceived in the marriage, high on dyadic adjustment, and low on sex-role traditionalism, with husbands expressing more traditionalism than wives. Slightly more than 50 percent of both husbands and wives perceived their style of marital decision making to be a syncratic one. Scales of communication, sex-role traditionalism, and dyadic adjustment demonstrated fairly high reliability in this sample.

Husband-wife collusion did not appear to be a major problem in the study, with less than a fifth of couples contacted reporting any collusion. Correlation of husbands' and wives' responses was substantially higher among colluders than among non-colluders.

Husbands' and wives' responses were weighted according to a scheme that would ensure that the data would be representative of the original aggregate of 1,112 couples.

## CHAPTER FIVE RESULTS

The models presented in Chapter Two were evaluated through the use of multiple regression analysis, a statistical procedure for analyzing the collective and separate contributions of two or more independent variables to the variation in a dependent variable. Prior to conducting data analyses, several checks were made on the data to ensure that the assumptions of regression were being met. In a few instances, variables were recoded in order to satisfy certain assumptions. This chapter will begin by discussing these checks on the data and the subsequent recoding of selected variables. Then, the main findings of the study will be discussed, particularly in regard to (a) the prediction of premarital cohabitation and (b) the effect of premarital cohabitation on marital quality, controlling for other variables.

### Assumptions of Regression Analysis

The major assumptions of regression analysis are (a) the dependent variable is measured on either the interval or ratio level, (b) relationships among variables are linear and additive, (c) the scores on the dependent variable are normally distributed at each combination of values on the independent variables, (d) the scores on the dependent variable have equal variances at each combination of values on

the independent variables, and (e) the residuals, or disturbance terms, are uncorrelated with the independent variable. Also, in order to assess with any degree of precision the contribution of each additional independent variable to explained variance in the dependent variable while controlling for other independent variables, it is important that these independent variables not be excessively intercorrelated (Kerlinger and Pedhazur, 1973; Schumm et al., 1980).

In this study, we have violated the first assumption concerning the level of measurement of the dependent variable because, of the four dependent variables in the models, dyadic adjustment and communication quality are essentially ordinal scales and premarital cohabitation and style of decision making were both employed as dichotomous variables. However, regression analysis is fairly robust to violation of this nature. Schumm and his associates state that, "It appears, however, that the use of ordinal measures is justifiable for most applications . . ., especially when as many rankings as possible are obtained . . . In general, no problems normally result from the use of ordinal variables as long as a monotonic relationship exists between the underlying continuum and the ordinal scale . . ." (Schumm et al., 1980: 254).

The use of OLS regression with dichotomous dependent variables is somewhat more problematic because this procedure violates several of the assumptions of linear regression (Knoke, 1975; Hanushek and Jackson, 1977). However,

Knoke has demonstrated that, in many instances, the substantive findings of OLS regression and more sophisticated, log-linear procedures are likely to be identical; and, when the methods do lead to different statistical conclusions, often the practical implications may be minor (Knoke, 1975: 432). In light of this, and for the sake of continuity and ease of interpretation, it was decided to use OLS regression throughout the analysis. However, the findings concerning the prediction of premarital cohabitation and marital decision making should be interpreted with some caution, until they can be verified with more appropriate statistical techniques such as logistic regression.

The assumption that relationships between independent and dependent variables are linear was evaluated with the test-for-linearity program in SPSS. This procedure detects whether or not there is a significant nonlinear component to the relationship between a given independent and dependent variable. This is accomplished by comparing the variance accounted for by linear regression to the variance accounted for by using the mean score on the dependent variable at each value of the independent variable to predict the dependent variable (Nie et al., 1975: 259-260). This test was conducted for the dyadic adjustment scale and the index of communication quality and the following independent variables: education, church attendance, sex-role traditionalism, educational heterogamy, age heterogamy, and religious

activity heterogamy, all of which are ordinal or interval-level variables.

Significant nonlinear relationships were found between the following variables for husbands: communication and religious activity heterogamy, and dyadic adjustment and age heterogamy. For wives, significant nonlinear relationships were found between dyadic adjustment and education, dyadic adjustment and religious activity heterogamy, communication and religious activity heterogamy, and dyadic adjustment and age heterogamy.

Clear patterns were discernible in all these nonlinear relationships with the exception of dyadic adjustment and education, for wives. Here, the trend appeared to be a more-or-less random nonlinearity when mean dyadic adjustment was evaluated across different education categories. Wives who had completed high school and wives with two and three years of college had higher dyadic adjustment scores than others, but no theoretically meaningful pattern could be detected. Hence, wife's education was retained in its interval form in the analysis.

On the other hand, very clear patterns were discernible with respect to age and religious-activity heterogamy for both husbands and wives. For example, religious activity heterogamy, referring to the absolute difference between a husband's and wife's frequency of church attendance, demonstrated a curvilinear relationship with respect to communication, for husbands, and communication and dyadic



adjustment for wives. That is, lowest scores on communication, for husbands and wives, and dyadic adjustment, for wives, were found when there was a slight difference in frequency of church attendance (that is, a difference of one category) compared to either no difference or a large difference. Hence, this variable was recoded as a dummy variable with the excluded group being the homogamous couples (that is, no difference in frequency of church attendance), RELHET1 being the couples with a slight difference in church attendance, and RELHET2 being the couples exhibiting a large difference in church attendance.

The effect of age heterogamy was also quite clear. For both husbands and wives, dyadic adjustment was highest when the husband was between 5 and 8 years older than his wife, and lowest when the husband was 9 or more years older than his wife. Therefore, age heterogamy was recoded as a dummy variable, with the excluded group being those respondents among whom either the wife was older than her husband or the husband was up to 4 years older than his wife. The variable AGEGP1 represents all respondents among whom the husband is between 5 and 8 years older than his wife and AGEGP2 represents those among whom the husband is 9 or more years older than his wife.

The additivity assumption was evaluated by examining possible interaction effects of all predictors in the analysis on the main dependent variable of interest, dyadic adjustment. Of 50 different interaction terms tested, no

significant interaction effects were found for wives. For husbands, one interaction effect was significant, that being the interaction of church attendance and sex-role traditionalism on dyadic adjustment. However, this interaction term added only 1.6 percent to the explained variance in the dependent variable. It was not believed that this small amount of substantive yield would warrant the cumbersome procedures of either splitting the sample or generating a series of dummy variables for each cross-classification of church attendance and sex-role traditionalism. Therefore, this interaction was not included in the analysis.

The next two assumptions delineated above were evaluated by examining plots of residuals for the prediction of premarital cohabitation, decision making, communication, and dyadic adjustment. The residuals from the prediction of premarital cohabitation and decision making exhibited a non-normal pattern in relation to the linear combination of independent variables. This pattern is an artifact of using OLS regression with dichotomous dependent variables, and is due to the fact that the error term can only take on two possible values for each predicted probability of being in the category coded "1" on the dependent variable. The other two plots did not reveal any gross abnormalities. For these, the assumption of normal distribution of Y scores at each combination of the X's was checked by observing that approximately 95 percent of the residuals fell within two standard deviations of either side of their mean (Schumm et

al., 1980: 257). Also, the plots did not give much evidence of heteroskedasticity. Finally, the assumption that residuals are uncorrelated with the predictors in each regression analysis is a theoretical assumption which cannot be verified empirically.

The requirement that independent variables possess discriminant validity, or, that they are not highly intercorrelated (Schumm et al., 1980) was evaluated by examining the correlation matrices containing all variables in the analysis, both for husbands (Table 5-1) and for wives (Table 5-2). Overall, multicollinearity is not much of a problem. As is evident from the tables, most of the correlations among the independent variables are low, well below .40, revealing relatively little intercorrelation among predictors. However, the correlation of number of marriage and presence of children, for wives (.45) and the correlation of church attendance and premarital cohabitation for both husbands and wives (-.48) are somewhat high, given the relatively small sample size.

#### Treatment of Missing Data

In many cases respondents failed to answer one or more items on the questionnaire, resulting in missing data for that particular item. In most instances, such item non-response was limited to only one or two of the questionnaire items. Excluding such respondents for the sake of a few missing items would have resulted in far fewer cases in the analysis, as well as the elimination of much valuable data.

TABLE 5-1. CORRELATION MATRIX OF ALL VARIABLES IN THE ANALYSIS FOR RESPONDENT HUSBANDS (N = 262).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 FAWHTCL	1.00	.22**	.01	.12	-.02	-.15*	-.03	-.17**	.06	.05	-.02	.06	-.05	-.14*	-.12	.04
2 EDUC		1.00	.13*	.02	-.30**	-.21**	.15*	-.11	.00	.06	.04	-.02	.00	-.09	.00	-.04
3 RELNONE			1.00	-.42**	-.21**	.00	.30**	-.02	.08	-.11	-.04	-.06	-.08	.07	-.02	-.06
4 CHURCH				1.00	.14*	-.06	-.48**	-.04	-.06	.15*	.00	-.06	.15*	-.05	.00	.16**
5 SRT					1.00	.14*	-.23**	.08	-.24**	-.19**	.06	.13*	-.05	.02	.05	-.04
6 NUMAR						1.00	-.01	.27**	-.15*	-.11	.16*	-.03	.05	.12	.25**	-.06
7 PC							1.00	.01	.11	-.09	.04	.02	-.02	.02	-.03	-.17**
8 CHDN								1.00	-.18**	-.09	.13*	-.02	.04	.03	.05	-.11
9 SYNC									1.00	.18**	.03	-.01	-.05	.02	-.03	.20**
10 COMMUN										1.00	.05	-.17**	.13*	.10	-.14*	.77**
11 EDUCET											1.00	.11	-.09	.12*	.02	.03
12 RELHET1												1.00	-.15*	-.11	.10	-.17**
13 RELHET2													1.00	.08	.10	.05
14 AGECP1														1.00	-.12*	.19**
15 AGECP2															1.00	-.15*
16 DYADJ																1.00

\*p &lt; .05

\*\*p &lt; .01

TABLE 5-2. CORRELATION MATRIX OF ALL VARIABLES IN THE ANALYSIS FOR RESPONDENT WIVES (N = 282).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 FAMHTCL	1.00	.32**	.08	.02	-.17**	-.22**	.08	-.10	.07	.06	-.07	.05	-.05	-.01	-.01	-.05
2 EDUC		1.00	.07	.10	-.41**	-.26**	-.01	-.17**	.07	.11	-.13*	.03	-.04	-.05	-.09	-.04
3 RELNONE			1.00	-.39**	-.30**	.03	.32**	-.02	-.01	-.09	.04	-.09	-.09	.11	.04	-.12*
4 CHURCH				1.00	.39**	-.10	-.48**	-.03	-.03	.12*	.02	-.03	.31**	-.08	-.05	.16**
5 SRT					1.00	.11	-.34**	.11	-.12*	.01	.06	-.03	.09	.03	.02	.18**
6 NUMAR						1.00	.14*	.45**	-.02	.03	.21**	-.10	.00	-.03	.00	.05
7 PC							1.00	.07	.08	-.14*	.05	.03	-.09	.04	.00	-.21**
8 CHDN								1.00	-.05	-.03	.11	-.04	.06	.04	.00	-.08
9 SYNC									1.00	.21*	-.04	.00	.00	.02	.01	.19**
10 COMMUN										1.00	-.01	-.14*	.01	.02	.06	.78**
11 EDUCJET											1.00	.08	-.04	.13*	-.04	.02
12 RELJET1												1.00	-.16**	-.06	.01	-.18**
13 RELJET2													1.00	.03	.10	.06
14 AGECP1														1.00	-.10	.12*
15 AGECP2															1.00	.00
16 DYADJ																1.00

\*p &lt; .05

\*\*p &lt; .01

Rather than discard such useful information, it was decided to substitute the mean response on any item, given by all respondents who answered the item, for all respondents who failed to answer the item. This was done separately for husbands and wives, and resulted in a usable sample of 544 respondents out of the original 596, or a total of 262 husbands and 282 wives.

Distribution on Study Variables for All  
Cases in the Final Analysis

Table 5-3 presents the variables, means, and standard deviations for all weighted cases in the final analysis. The effects of sample weighting appear to be quite minimal. For example, among unweighted cases, 63.2 percent of husbands' fathers and 60.4 percent of wives' fathers have white-collar occupations. After weighting, these figures are 60 percent and 58 percent, respectively. Similarly, unweighted mean educational attainment is 15.40 for husbands and 14.85 for wives, which differs very little from the weighted means which are 15.30 and 14.78, respectively. Virtually no difference can be seen in perceptual and attitudinal variables before, versus after, weighting. Mean sex-role traditionalism scores on unweighted cases are 43.6 for husbands and 34.7 for wives, compared to 44.04 and 35.44 for weighted husbands and wives, respectively. Communication scores are not quite comparable because mean communication index scores for weighted cases are computed from 11, rather than 12, items. However, adjusting for this, scores on communication are also similar. Among unweighted cases,

TABLE 5-3. VARIABLES, MEANS, AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR HUSBANDS (N = 262) AND WIVES (N = 282).

	HUSBANDS		WIVES	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
FAMHTCL = Father's Occupation is White Collar				
EDUC = Education in Years of School Completed (0 to 18)	.60	.49	.58	.50
RELNONE = Claiming to Have a Religious Preference of "None"	15.30	2.14	14.78	2.13
CHURCH = Frequency of Church Attendance (0 to 5)	.30	.45	.22	.41
SRT = Sex-Role Traditionalism (0 to 124)	1.37	1.71	1.45	1.72
NUMAR = Having been Married One or More Times Before	44.04	13.37	35.44	13.80
PC = Having Lived Together for any Duration Prior to Marriage	.34	.47	.37	.48
CHDN = Having Minor Children at Home	.72	.45	.71	.45
SYNC = Having a Syncretic Form of Decision Making	.33	.47	.34	.47
COMMUN = Index of Quality of Communication in the Marriage (0 to 44)	.49	.50	.50	.50
EDUCHET = Absolute Value of Educational Heterogamy (0 to 18)	32.69	4.95	34.33	5.25
RELHET1 = Religious Activity Heterogamy--"Small Difference"	1.58	1.52	1.64	1.54
RELHET2 = Religious Activity Heterogamy--"Large Difference"	.24	.43	.24	.43
AGEGP1 = Husband is 5 to 8 years Older than Wife	.07	.25	.08	.27
AGEGP2 = Husband is 9 or more years Older than Wife	.17	.38	.15	.36
DYADJ = Dyadic Adjustment (0 to 151)	.07	.26	.06	.23
	114.69	14.22	116.95	14.54

50.9 percent of husbands and 52.9 percent of wives report syncratic decision making. After weighting, these percentages are 49 and 50, respectively. Finally, the dyadic adjustment scores are virtually unchanged: unweighted means are 114.9 for husbands and 117.1 for wives; weighted means are 114.69 for husbands and 116.95 for wives.

Table 5-3 also shows the distribution on educational, age, and religious activity heterogamy for weighted cases. Educational heterogamy, measured by the absolute difference between husband's and wife's years of formal education, is fairly low for the sample as a whole. Mean difference among couples is only about one-and-a-half years (1.58 for husbands in the analysis and 1.64 for wives). For both husbands and wives, most marriages are characterized by homogamy with respect to religious activity. Twenty-four percent of husbands and wives are slightly heterogamous with respect to church attendance, while among 7 percent of husbands and 8 percent of wives, there is a large difference in church attendance. Seventeen percent of husbands and 15 percent of wives in the analysis are characterized by marriages in which the husband is 5 to 8 years older than the wife, while for 7 percent of husbands and 6 percent of wives, the husband is 9 or more years older than the wife.

#### The Prediction of Premarital Cohabitation

The prediction of premarital cohabitation was accomplished by regressing premarital cohabitation, as a dichotomous dummy variable, on father's occupation, education,



religious preference, church attendance, sex-role traditionalism, and number of previous marriages. Premarital cohabitation was coded such that the excluded group consisted of respondents who claimed not to have cohabited with their spouses at all before marriage. The contrast group included all respondents who had cohabited with their spouses for any period of time prior to marriage. While the cohabiting category includes a very wide range of cohabiting experience, from very brief to very lengthy, it was believed to be theoretically more tenable to lump all cohabitators together than to include respondents with only a brief cohabiting experience in the same category with respondents who had no cohabiting experience at all.

The analysis was conducted in two different ways: first for husbands and wives separately, and then for couples. Examining the most significant predictors of premarital cohabitation for husbands and wives separately allowed for the retention of independent variables such as education, church attendance, and sex-role traditionalism in their interval or ordinal form, and thus revealed the relative strength of each independent variable on the criterion variable. However, when this analysis is done separately for each spouse, it is not possible to distinguish the varying effect on the likelihood of having cohabited for each possible combination of husband and wife scores on a particular independent variable. For this reason, the second

phase of the analysis involved examining the most significant predictors of a couple's having cohabited, using as the predictors various husband-wife combinations of scores on the same set of independent variables.

Factors Affecting the Likelihood of Having Cohabited  
Premaritally, for Husbands and Wives Separately

Table 5-4 presents the results of regressing premarital cohabitation on father's occupation, education, religious preference, church attendance, sex-role traditionalism, and

TABLE 5-4. UNSTANDARDIZED AND STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE REGRESSION OF PREMARITAL COHABITATION ON PREDICTORS IN THE MODEL FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES, SEPARATELY (N = 262 HUSBANDS, 282 WIVES).

	<u>Husbands</u>		<u>Wives</u>	
	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>
FAWHTCL	-.01	-.01	.08	.09
EDUC	.02	.11	-.01	-.05
RELNONE	.08	.08	.13*	.12*
CHURCH	-.11**	-.43**	-.09**	-.34**
SRT	-.01*	-.12*	-.01**	-.19**
NUMAR	.01	.01	.12*	.13*
R <sup>2</sup>	.27		.30	

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

number of previous marriages for husbands and wives, separately. Standardized and unstandardized coefficients, as well as percentages of variation explained in the dependent

variable, are shown. When the dependent variable is nominal and dichotomous, as it is in this analysis, the unstandardized coefficients have a probabilistic interpretation. That is, each coefficient represents the increment or decrement in probability of having cohabited before marriage for every one-unit increase in a particular predictor. Education (EDUC) and church attendance and sex-role traditionalism (CHURCH and SRT) are coded as interval and ordinal variables, respectively. Father's occupation (FAWHTCL), religious preference (RELNONE) and number of previous marriages (NUMAR) are dummies representing the respondent's father having a white-collar occupation, having no religious preference, and having been married at least once before, respectively.

For husbands, two variables emerge as significant predictors of having cohabited prior to marriage: church attendance and sex-role traditionalism. Frequency of church attendance has a very strong negative effect, with a Beta of  $-.43$ . The unstandardized coefficient reveals that for every one-unit increase in church attendance (e.g., an increase from attending "a few times" to attending "about once a month") the probability of having cohabited before marriage decreases by  $.11$ . Sex-role traditionalism has a negative, but somewhat milder effect, with a Beta of  $-.12$ . These findings are in the expected direction, that is, it is not surprising that traditional husbands who attend church frequently are less likely than others to cohabit with their future spouses before marriage.

Education has a slight positive effect on cohabitation (Beta = .11) but this effect is not significant. Those husbands who indicate no religious preference are slightly more likely to have cohabited premaritally (Beta = .08) but this effect, also, is not significant. Just over a quarter, or 27 percent, of the variation in cohabitation is explained by the model for husbands.

More variables emerge as significant predictors of having cohabited premaritally for wives than for husbands. Religious preference, church attendance, sex-role traditionalism, and number of previous marriages are all significantly associated with cohabitation, for wives. As with husbands, both church attendance and sex-role traditionalism are negatively related to having cohabited (Beta =  $-.34$  and  $-.19$ , respectively). In addition, the probability of having cohabited before marriage is 13 percent higher for wives with no religious preference compared to wives who state a religious preference of Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or other. The probability of having cohabited is 12 percent higher among wives who have been married previously, compared to those who are in their first marriage. Among wives, the model explains 30 percent of the variation in premarital cohabitation.

#### The Prediction of Premarital Cohabitation Employing the Couple as the Unit of Analysis

As indicated above, the shortcoming of the analysis of premarital cohabitation separately for husbands and wives is

that one cannot discover the varying effects on the dependent variable of various husband-wife combinations on the independent variables. For example, the separate analyses do not provide information about whether the negative association of church attendance with premarital cohabitation, for husbands, is due to religious husbands being unwilling to cohabit, or to religious husbands tending to marry religious wives who are unwilling to cohabit. That is, one cannot determine whether it is the husband's religiosity, the wife's religiosity, or both factors, which primarily affect cohabitation. For this reason, the model was estimated using the couple as the unit of analysis, and employing the independent variables in a form representing various husband-wife combinations on each predictor.

Only those couples who agreed on whether or not they had cohabited were included in this analysis. Thus, the 5 couples were excluded who gave contradictory answers to the basic question about having cohabited. The predictors were constructed by creating, for each independent variable in the model, four dummy variables representing whether the husband was "higher" on that variable, the wife was "higher" on that variable, both were "low" on the variable, or both were "high" on the variable.

In each case, the excluded group consists of couples among whom both spouses are low on that particular predictor. For father's occupation, low refers to a blue-collar occupation and high refers to a white-collar occupation.

For religious preference, low refers to having a religious preference and high refers to having no religious preference. For number of previous marriages, low refers to not having been married previously and high refers to having been married previously. Husbands' and wives' scores on education, church attendance, and sex-role traditionalism were designated as low or high depending upon whether or not they fell below or above the median score on each variable. Thus, a drawback to this analysis is that these interval- and ordinal-level variables had to be collapsed into dichotomous categories, resulting in a loss of information and an associated lesser effect of each predictor on the criterion variable.

Table 5-5 presents the predictors, the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients, and the percent of variation explained in premarital cohabitation for the model, employing the couple as the unit of analysis. The data tend to qualify the findings of the first analysis. When couples are examined, the data show that church attendance and sex-role traditionalism have a significant negative impact on cohabitation only when both spouses attend church frequently (Beta =  $-.17$ ) and when both spouses are traditional (Beta =  $-.16$ ).

Couples among whom only the wife or the husband attends church frequently are not significantly less likely to have cohabited than those among whom both spouses are infrequent churchgoers. Similarly, if only one of the spouses is

TABLE 5-5. UNSTANDARDIZED AND STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE REGRESSION OF PREMARITAL COHABITATION WITH DUMMY VARIABLES REPRESENTING HUSBAND-WIFE CONGRUENCE ON FATHER'S OCCUPATION, EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE, CHURCH ATTENDANCE, SEX-ROLE TRADITIONALISM, AND NUMBER OF PREVIOUS MARRIAGES (N = 236).

	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>
Wife's Father's Occupation is White Collar	.07	.07
Husband's Father's Occupation is White Collar	-.06	-.06
Both Spouses' Father's Occupations are White Collar	.09	.09
Wife's Education Is High	-.12	-.09
Husband's Education Is High	.08	.07
Both Spouses' Educations Are High	.02	.02
Wife Specifies No Religious Preference	.24*	.15*
Husband Specifies No Religious Preference	.19*	.15*
Both Spouses Specify No Religious Preference	.22*	.17*
Wife Attends Church Frequently	-.07	-.05
Husband Attends Church Frequently	-.01	.00
Both Spouses Attend Church Frequently	-.15*	-.17*
Wife Has Traditional Sex-Role Attitudes	.09	.08
Husband Has Traditional Sex-Role Attitudes	.12	.10
Both Spouses Have Traditional Sex-Role Attitudes	-.15*	-.16*
Wife Has Been Married Before	.20*	.15*
Husband Has Been Married Before	.07	.06
Both Spouses Have Been Married Before	.08	.07
R <sup>2</sup>	.25	

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

traditional, the couple is not significantly less likely to have cohabited than if neither spouse is traditional.

On the other hand, religious preference significantly affects the likelihood of cohabiting premaritally in all three contrast groups. Compared to couples among whom both partners state a preference for a specific religion, couples among whom only the wife has no religious preference are 24 percent more likely to have cohabited, and those among whom only the husband has no religious preference are 19 percent more likely to have cohabited, and those among whom both husband and wife have no religious preference are 22 percent more likely to have cohabited.

Having been married at least once before has a significant effect on the likelihood of a couple having cohabited premaritally only when it is the wife who has been married previously. Thus, couples among whom the wife is entering a second or later marriage while the husband is entering a first marriage are 20 percent more likely to live together before marriage than couples among whom both partners are entering a first marriage. However, couples among whom only the husband has been married previously or among whom both partners have been married previously are not significantly more likely to cohabit than first-marriage couples. Employing the data in this fashion explains 25 percent of the variation in cohabitation among couples.

In summary, when the analysis of premarital cohabitation focuses upon trying to explain which couples, rather



than which husbands or wives, are most likely to live together before marriage, the initial predictors are only significant for certain combinations of husbands' and wives' scores. The exception to this is religious preference, or, more specifically, stating a religious preference of "none." When husbands were examined separately, this variable was not significant. However, for couples, when either or both partners states a religious preference of "none," the couple is significantly more likely to have cohabited than if both state a specific religious preference.

It is probable that the key variable here is religiosity, with more religious people being less willing to cohabit outside of marriage. Stating outright that one has no religious preference is a better indicator of low religiosity than, for example, stating that one does not attend church. For this reason, church attendance is not as powerful a predictor of the likelihood of having cohabited premaritally. Only when both partners are frequent church attenders is the couple significantly less likely to have cohabited.

Similarly, it is only when both partners are traditional with regard to sex-roles in the family that the couple is less likely to have cohabited. In regard to both church attendance and sex-role traditionalism, the findings suggest that cohabitation prior to marriage is coming to be so commonly practiced that it takes both husband and wife to be

active churchgoers or to be traditional before they will refuse to go along with this trend.

Finally, while it would seem reasonable to suppose that couples consisting of at least one divorced partner would be more likely to cohabit premaritally, this obtains only when the wife has been married previously but the husband has not. Perhaps among these couples the wife is especially wary of marrying without cohabiting first. She has already experienced at least one divorce and may be somewhat cautious about entering another marriage. She may also be aware of a disparity in experience between herself and a future husband who has never been married before. Hence, it may seem especially imperative to her to have a trial period of cohabitation before remarrying. However, without detailed questioning about each partner's motivation for cohabiting, this remains in the realm of speculation.

#### The Effect of Premarital Cohabitation Upon Subsequent Dyadic Adjustment

The major goal of this study is to determine whether marital satisfaction is higher or lower among individuals who cohabit with their future spouses prior to marriage, compared to those who do not. This was accomplished by performing a regression analysis with dyadic adjustment as a continuous dependent variable on premarital cohabitation, coded as a dummy independent variable. In this case, the unstandardized coefficient represents the difference in mean dyadic adjustment between those who cohabited compared to those who did not.

This and the following analyses of communication and decision making were performed separately for husbands and wives, rather than for couples. This is conceptually defensible because, unlike the fact of having cohabited, it is possible for husbands' and wives' experiences to differ with regard to the perception of dyadic adjustment, quality of communication, and style of decision making. With regard to dyadic adjustment, however, husbands' and wives' perceptions agree fairly closely; the correlation between their scale scores is .71.

#### Total Association Versus Total Effect.

In the analysis of the relationship between premarital cohabitation and dyadic adjustment, it was desirable to make a distinction between total association and total effect. The total association between two variables is given by their zero-order correlation. The total effect of the independent upon the dependent variable is that part of the total association which is neither due to the common causes of each, to correlation among their causes, nor to predetermined correlation of the independent variable with other independent variables that affect the dependent variable (Alwin and Hauser, 1975: 39). In this case, the total effect of premarital cohabitation upon dyadic adjustment is the partial regression coefficient between the two when controlling for the effect on dyadic adjustment of the other variables in the model: father's occupation, education,

religious preference, church attendance, educational heterogamy, religious activity heterogamy, age heterogamy, sex-role traditionalism, number of previous marriages, and presence of minor children. Thus, for any effect of cohabitation upon adjustment, it can be determined whether all or part of that effect is due to the differences between cohabitators and non-cohabitators with respect to these socio-demographic variables.

The zero-order correlation, or total association, of cohabitation with dyadic adjustment is negative and significant for both husbands and wives. The correlation is  $-.17$  for husbands (Table 5-1) and  $-.21$  for wives (Table 5-2). For husbands, the unstandardized coefficient indicates that, on average, cohabitators score 5.3 points lower on dyadic adjustment than do noncohabitators. Mean dyadic adjustment is 118.5 for noncohabitators and 113.2 for cohabitators. For wives, the effect is even more pronounced. Mean dyadic adjustment is 121.8 for noncohabitators and 115.0 for cohabitators, a difference, on average, of nearly 7 points. Altogether, premarital cohabitation explains 2.8 percent of the variance in dyadic adjustment for husbands and 4.5 percent for wives.

#### Control for Spurious Correlation.

The negative association between premarital cohabitation and dyadic adjustment is, by far, the most intriguing finding of this study. It was of interest to determine to what extent this effect might be spurious, that is, due to

the possibility that certain kinds of people would be both more likely to cohabit and less likely to express high dyadic adjustment. To control for such spurious correlation, dyadic adjustment was again regressed on premarital cohabitation, this time with all other independent variables in the equation. Table 5-6 shows the results of this regression. For wives, premarital cohabitation is still significantly and negatively related to adjustment ( $Beta = -.14$ ). For husbands, the effect is still negative, but does not quite attain significance ( $Beta = -.13$ ).

The unstandardized partial coefficients show that controlling for other variables, the total negative effect of cohabitation is somewhat reduced. For cohabitators compared to noncohabitators, mean adjustment is 4.2 points lower for husbands and 4.6 points lower for wives. Hence, about 21 percent of the total association for husbands and 32 percent of the total association for wives is spurious.

An examination of the correlation matrices for husbands' and wives' variables in Tables 5-1 and 5-2 reveal which variables are most likely responsible for this spurious effect. For husbands, frequency of church attendance is both positively correlated with dyadic adjustment ( $r = .16$ ) and negatively correlated with having cohabited premaritally ( $r = -.48$ ). Similarly, having a religious preference of "none" is positively correlated with having cohabited ( $r = .30$ ) and negatively correlated with dyadic adjustment ( $r = -.06$ ). Clearly, then, part of the negative effect of

TABLE 5-6. UNSTANDARDIZED AND STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE REGRESSION OF COMMUNICATION, DECISION MAKING, AND DYADIC ADJUSTMENT ON PREMARITAL COHABITATION AND OTHER ATTITUDINAL AND SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES (N = 262 HUSBANDS, 282 WIVES).

	Communication				Decision Making (Syncratic Form)				Dyadic Adjustment			
	Husbands		Wives		Husbands		Wives		Husbands		Wives	
	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>
FAWHTCL	.31	.03	.62	.06	.05	.05	.05	.05	1.00	.03	-1.18	-.01
EDUC	-.01	.00	.25	.10	-.03*	-.13*	.00	.00	-.39	-.06	.16	.02
RELNONE	-1.19	-.11	-1.05	-.08	-.03	.03	-.08	-.07	-.18	-.01	-2.55	-.07
CHURCH	.20	.07	.20	.07	.01	.02	.01	.03	.78	.09	.33	.04
EDUCHET	.32	.10	.04	.01	.02	.08	-.01	-.03	.56	.06	.10	.01
RELHET1	-1.48*	-.13*	-1.82*	-.15*	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	-4.47*	-.14*	-5.68**	-.17**
RELHET2	1.88	.10	-1.40	-.05	-.11	-.05	.00	.00	1.06	.02	-.42	-.01
AGEGP1	1.18	.09	.76	.05	.05	.04	.05	.04	6.41**	.17**	5.66*	.14*
AGEGP2	-1.84	-.09	2.40	.09	.07	.03	.04	.02	-5.51	-.10	1.37	.02
SRT	-.08**	-.21**	-.01	-.04	-.01**	-.24**	.00	-.12	-.07	-.07	.11	.10
NUMAR	-.74	-.07	1.09	.10	-.12	-.12	.03	.03	-1.07	-.04	3.76	.12
PC	-.83	-.08	-1.37	-.12	.09	.08	.07	.07	-4.20	-.13	-4.61*	-.14*
CHDN	-.71	-.07	-.51	-.05	-.15*	-.14*	-.05	-.05	-2.93	-.10	-4.55*	-.15*
R <sup>2</sup>	.15		.08		.12		.03		.13		.13	

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

cohabitation on dyadic adjustment is due to the fact that religious people, as indexed by religious preference and church attendance, are both less likely to cohabit before marriage and more likely to express high dyadic adjustment.

As Table 5-2 shows, this is also true for wives. Having a religious preference of "none" is positively related to having cohabited ( $r = .32$ ) and negatively related to dyadic adjustment ( $-.12$ ). Attending church frequently is negatively related to having cohabited ( $r = -.48$ ) and positively related to dyadic adjustment ( $r = .16$ ). For wives, an additional control factor is important: those whose sex-role attitudes are more traditional are both less likely to have cohabited ( $r = -.34$ ) and more likely to express high dyadic adjustment ( $r = .18$ ).

#### Explaining the Negative Effects of Cohabitation

While part of the effect of cohabitation on dyadic adjustment is explained by controlling for religiosity and sex-role traditionalism, the major part of this effect is not explained by controlling for these and other independent variables in the model. To account for the rest of this negative effect, two possibilities have been postulated: either something about the cohabitation experience itself tends to reduce marital satisfaction, or some other socio-cultural, personality, or attitudinal factor exists which affects both dyadic adjustment and the propensity to cohabit, but has not been included in the model.

The first possibility, regarding the cohabitation experience itself, was examined by considering the association between the duration of cohabitation and dyadic adjustment. A reasonable explanation of the negative effect of cohabitation might simply be that, since cohabitators have been together in an intimate arrangement longer than have noncohabitators, they must naturally have had more time for interpersonal conflict to develop. While there are no data concerning the length of time that the noncohabitators were together prior to marriage, there are data on the length of time that cohabitators lived together before marrying. If the above explanation is valid, one would also expect that cohabitators who have been together longer would have had more chance for conflict and should reveal less marital satisfaction than cohabitators who only lived together for a short period of time. This, however, is not the case. The correlation between dyadic adjustment and number of months' duration of cohabitation is virtually zero ( $r = .01$  for husbands and  $-.03$  for wives) and nonsignificant.

The other possible explanation for the negative effect of cohabitation is that cohabitators and noncohabitators differ on some other key dimension which also affects marital quality. It was hypothesized that one such important attitudinal factor might be the degree of commitment a person feels toward marriage as an institution. Possibly cohabitators are less committed, in general, to marriage as a permanent arrangement than are noncohabitators, and therefore are more



ready to acknowledge dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of their relationships.

Marriage permanence ideology was operationalized in the study by asking respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "No matter how much trouble a husband and wife are having getting along, the best thing to do is to stay married and try to work out their problems." Those who agree or strongly agree with this statement are regarded as scoring high on marital permanence ideology. For both husbands and wives, cohabitators are significantly lower on this factor than are noncohabitators. The correlation of having lived together with marital permanence ideology is  $-.26$  for husbands and  $-.25$  for wives. However, the correlation of marital permanence ideology with dyadic adjustment is very low ( $r = .04$  for husbands,  $.11$  for wives) and is not significant. In addition, controlling for differences in marital permanence ideology does not significantly reduce the negative effect of cohabitation on dyadic adjustment. The partial Betas for the regression of dyadic adjustment on cohabitation while controlling for marital permanence are  $-.17$  for husbands and  $-.20$  for wives, compared to zero-order correlations between cohabitation and adjustment of  $-.17$  for husbands and  $-.21$  for wives. It is clear that, while cohabitators are less committed to the permanence of marriage than are noncohabitators, this does not explain the negative relationship between cohabitation and

adjustment. Without further data, any other explanations would be purely speculative.

The Effect of Premarital Cohabitation on Quality of Communication and Style of Decision Making

Table 5-6 shows that having cohabited before marriage has a slightly negative, but nonsignificant, effect on quality of communication for both husbands and wives, controlling for other variables in the model. The partial Betas are  $-.08$  for husbands and  $-.12$  for wives. Having cohabited is positively related to syncretic decision making in the marriage for both husbands and wives (partial Beta =  $.08$  and  $.07$ , respectively). The effect, however, is again nonsignificant. Therefore, controlling for sociodemographic and attitudinal differences, cohabitators do not significantly differ from noncohabitators in quality of communication and style of decision making in marriage.

The Effect of Other Variables in the Model on Dyadic Adjustment, Communication, and Decision Making

Table 5-6 also shows the effect of variables other than cohabitation on dyadic adjustment, communication, and decision making. Other than premarital cohabitation, two variables emerge having significant effects on dyadic adjustment for both husbands and wives: religious activity heterogeneity and age heterogeneity.

Religious Activity Heterogeneity

Couples among whom there is a slight difference in frequency of church attendance are significantly lower in dyadic adjustment than those among whom there is no difference

(Beta =  $-.14$  for husbands,  $-.17$  for wives). The unstandardized coefficients indicate that differing by only one category in frequency of church attendance results in an average decrement in dyadic adjustment of 4.47 points for husbands and 5.68 points for wives. A larger difference in church attendance has no significant effect on dyadic adjustment. Apparently, when there is only a slight difference in church attendance there is more potential for conflict over religious participation than when there is a large difference. In the latter situation, it is likely that couples have come to accept their differences and do not attempt to change each other's attitudes.

#### Age Heterogamy

Those marriages in which husbands are 5 to 8 years older than their wives are happier for both husbands and wives (Beta =  $.17$  for husbands,  $.14$  for wives) than those in which either the wife is older or the husband is less than 5 years older. The husband being 9 or more years older than his wife has a negative effect on dyadic adjustment for husbands (Beta =  $-.10$ ), although the difference is not quite significant. No such effect is apparent for wives.

#### Presence of Minor Children

The presence of minor children in the home has a negative and significant effect on dyadic adjustment for wives (Beta =  $-.15$ ). Compared to those with no children, wives with minor children are, on average, 4.55 points lower in dyadic adjustment. For husbands, the effect is also

negative (Beta =  $-.10$ ) but not quite significant. Altogether, the model explains 13 percent of the variance in dyadic adjustment for both husbands and wives.

### Communication

Religious activity heterogamy is, again, a significant factor influencing perceived quality of communication in the marriage. Being slightly different with respect to church attendance has a negative effect on communication for both husbands (Beta =  $-.13$ ) and wives (Beta =  $-.15$ ). For husbands, but not for wives, being traditional with respect to sex roles is also detrimental to good communication in the marriage (Beta =  $-.21$ ). Perhaps the more traditional husbands subscribe to a "macho" stereotype of the male which dictates that being overly sensitive, expressive, or communicative is unmasculine. The model explains 15 percent of the variance in communication for husbands, but only 8 percent of the variance for wives.

Having a syncratic form of decision making in the marriage is significantly and negatively related to education, sex-role traditionalism, and presence of children for husbands. More highly educated husbands are less likely to engage in syncratic decision making (Beta =  $-.13$ ) than less-educated ones. More traditional husbands are also less likely to be syncratic (Beta =  $-.24$ ). Husbands with minor children in the home are less likely to be syncratic (Beta =  $-.14$ ) than husbands without children.

Among wives, none of the variables in the model is significantly related to decision making. There is a slight negative effect for sex-role traditionalism ( $Beta = -.12$ ) and presence of children ( $Beta = -.05$ ), but, unlike the effects for husbands, these are not significant. The model explains 12 percent of the variance in decision making for husbands and only 3 percent for wives.

#### Correlation Among the Dependent Variables

The correlation matrices in Tables 5-1 and 5-2 reveal that there is a substantial amount of intercorrelation among the three dependent variables, dyadic adjustment, communication, and decision making. The correlation between communication and dyadic adjustment is very high: .77 for husbands and .78 for wives. Undoubtedly, communication is a critical factor in the quality of a marriage. The direction of causality, however, cannot be determined in this study. It is also very possible that communication and dyadic adjustment are simply two different dimensions of marital quality.

Communication is positively correlated with having a syncratic form of decision making ( $r = .18$  for husbands, .21 for wives). This is a finding that one would expect, given that the definition of syncratic is that couples make most decisions in consultation with one another. Finally, having a syncratic form of decision making is associated with higher dyadic adjustment for both husbands and wives ( $r = .20$  and .19, respectively).

### Summary

Models presented in Chapter Two to explain both premarital cohabitation and the effect of cohabitation on marital quality were evaluated through multiple regression. For the most part, the assumptions of regression were met prior to proceeding with the data analysis. Religious activity heterogamy and age heterogamy exhibited significantly non-linear relationships with communication and dyadic adjustment and were subsequently recoded into dummy-variable form for the analysis. One significant interaction effect was found for dyadic adjustment for husbands, the interaction of church attendance and sex-role traditionalism. This interaction contributed less than 2 percent to the explained variance in the dependent variable and, consequently, was not dealt with. No interaction effects were found for females.

The prediction of premarital cohabitation was accomplished with husbands and wives separately, and then with couples, as the units of analysis. The separate analysis on husbands revealed frequency of church attendance and sex-role traditionalism to be the two strongest predictors of having cohabited before marriage. Husbands who attended church frequently and husbands with more traditional sex-role attitudes were significantly less likely than others to have cohabited. Among wives, those who listed a religious preference of "none" and those who had been married at least

once before were significantly more likely to have cohabited. Those who attended church frequently and those who exhibited more traditional sex-role attitudes were significantly less likely than others to have cohabited.

When couples were employed as the unit of analysis, it was found that church attendance and sex-role traditionalism only affected the likelihood of cohabitation when both partners were "high" on these variables. Hence, frequent church attendance was negatively related to having cohabited premaritally only when husband and wife were both frequent church attenders. Similarly, sex-role traditionalism was negatively related to having cohabited only when both partners were traditional. Couples among whom the wife had been married previously but the husband had not were significantly more likely than others to have cohabited. Couples among whom either or both partners had no religious preference were significantly more likely than others to have cohabited. Altogether these variables explain 25 percent of the variation in premarital cohabitation among married couples.

Having cohabited premaritally was negatively related to dyadic adjustment for both husbands and wives. Twenty-one percent of this negative correlation for husbands and 32 percent for wives is spurious, that is, not caused by cohabitation itself but due to the fact that religious, traditional people are both less likely to cohabit premaritally and more likely to express high satisfaction in marriage. The remaining part of this negative correlation is not

explained by other variables in the model. There is no correlation between dyadic adjustment and the number of months that the couple cohabited prior to marriage. Also, while cohabitators are significantly less committed to marriage as a permanent arrangement than are noncohabitators, controlling for this variable does not explain away the negative cohabitation effect.

Cohabitators do not significantly differ from noncohabitators in quality of communication in the marriage and the likelihood of having a syncratic form of decision making.

Other variables, in addition to premarital cohabitation, significantly affect dyadic adjustment, communication, and decision making. Couples among whom there is a slight difference in frequency of church attendance are significantly lower than others in dyadic adjustment and communication. Those marriages in which husbands are 5 to 8 years older than their wives are significantly happier for both husbands and wives. The presence of minor children in the home is negatively related to dyadic adjustment for wives. Sex-role traditionalism is negatively related to communication for husbands, but not for wives. Also, among husbands, the more educated, the more traditional, and those with children are significantly less likely than others to have marriages that are characterized by syncratic decision making.

A substantial amount of intercorrelation exists among the dependent variables pertaining to marital interaction



and marital quality. Communication is correlated .77 for husbands and .78 for wives with dyadic adjustment. High-quality communication is positively correlated with having a syncratic form of decision making for both husbands and wives. Similarly, for both, syncratic decision making is associated with higher dyadic adjustment.

## CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

This study was conducted with the purpose of answering three interrelated questions concerning premarital cohabitation with the future spouse. First, it was of interest to determine the kinds of characteristics, both sociodemographic and attitudinal, that distinguish couples who do and do not cohabit with their spouses before marriage. Second, it was desirable to investigate whether or not any differences exist between cohabitators and noncohabitators in such dimensions of marital interaction as quality of communication and mode of decision making. Finally, the main focus of this study has been to explore the possible consequences of premarital cohabitation for subsequent marital satisfaction.

The study was accomplished through a cross-sectional design. Data were gathered by questionnaire from husbands and wives in 309 marriages. Couples were selected who had been married for at least one year, and no more than two years in order to best isolate the effects of having lived together on dyadic adjustment. The sample was, by and large, young, highly-educated, and white-collar, with the majority of husbands and wives having entered their first marriages. Most couples, fully 70 percent according to the wives' data, had lived together for at least some period of time before marriage.

The questionnaire was constructed to gather data in order to test a model for the prediction of premarital cohabitation and a model for the estimation of the effects of premarital cohabitation on communication, decision making, and dyadic adjustment, while controlling for social class, education, religious preference, church attendance, educational heterogamy, age heterogamy, religious activity heterogamy, sex-role traditionalism, number of previous marriages, and presence of children. These variables were extracted from past research as being those predictors most strongly associated with both marital satisfaction and with the propensity to cohabit before marriage. These models were presented and discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this report.

#### Characteristics That Differentiate Cohabitors From Noncohabitors

When individual husbands and wives were employed as the units of analysis, several predictors of premarital cohabitation emerged which have been found by other researchers to distinguish cohabitors from noncohabitors. Religiosity, as roughly indexed by religious preference and frequency of church attendance, was found to be negatively correlated with the likelihood of cohabiting before marriage, a finding in agreement with past research (Henze and Hudson, 1974; Clayton and Voss, 1977; Newcomb and Bentler, 1980). The greater the frequency with which husbands and wives attended church, the less likely they were to have cohabited with their spouses before marriage. Also, for wives, listing a

religious preference of "none" was negatively correlated with the likelihood of having cohabited premaritally.

Several other researchers have found cohabitation to be more likely among people with either liberal sex-role attitudes or a propensity to engage in unconventional behavior (Henze and Hudson, 1974; Bower and Christopherson, 1977; Clayton and Voss, 1977; Newcomb and Bentler, 1980). Similarly, in this study traditional sex-role attitudes were negatively associated with cohabitation for both husbands and wives.

Like Newcomb and Bentler (1980), this study found that cohabiting women were significantly more likely to have been married previously than noncohabiting women. However, contrary to men in the study by Clayton and Voss (1977), husbands in the current study who had been married previously were not significantly more likely to have cohabited before marriage.

An interesting finding that emerged in the current study was that when couples, rather than individual husbands and wives, were employed as the units of analysis, only certain combinations of husbands' and wives' values on the independent variables had significant effects on the likelihood of cohabitation. For example, couples were significantly less likely to have lived together before marriage only when both husband and wife were frequent churchgoers and only when both husband and wife were traditional in their attitudes regarding sex roles. Additionally, couples

among whom either or both partners listed a religious preference of "none" were significantly more likely to have cohabited than among whom both listed a preference for a specific religion. Evidently, the practice of cohabiting before marriage is becoming common enough that it takes both partners to be religious or to be traditional in order for a couple not to engage in this practice.

Having been married at least once before is only associated with the likelihood of cohabitation among couples in which the wife has been married before but the husband has not. These couples are significantly more likely to cohabit before marriage than others. However, the wife's having been married before is not significantly associated with premarital cohabitation among couples in which the husband has also been married before. Without data regarding the reason for cohabiting, it is not immediately apparent why those marriages that are the first for the husband but a second or later one for the wife are significantly more likely to involve cohabitation than others. It is suggested that the reason for this is that the wife is especially wary of remarriage without a trial period first, due to the disparity in marital experiences between herself and her potential husband. It would be fruitful, in further research, to explore in more detail the various reasons given by husbands and wives for living together before marriage.

The qualification of findings in the individual husband and wife analyses that were obtained upon employing the

couple as the unit of analysis has methodological implications for other studies. In particular, the research of Newcomb and Bentler (1980), in which various personality and background characteristics emerged as predictors of cohabitation for husbands and wives individually, may have to be reexamined. It may be that, similar to the findings of this study, only certain husband-wife combinations of scores on these characteristics significantly differentiate the cohabiting from the noncohabiting couples when couples, rather than individuals, are studied. Theoretically, it makes more sense to do so, since the husband's cohabitation and the wife's cohabitation are in no sense independent of each other. In order for cohabitation to have occurred, there must have been a mutual decision to do so. For this reason, it is imperative to examine which kinds of couples, rather than individuals, are more likely to come to this decision.

The Comparison of Cohabitators With Noncohabitators on  
Quality of Communication and Mode of Decision Making

Very little research has been addressed to determining whether or not cohabitators differ from noncohabitators on such aspects of marital interaction as communication and decision making. While cohabitators were expected to be more likely to exhibit high-quality communication and syncratic decision making, this was not found. The trend was for cohabitators to exhibit somewhat lower communication and to be somewhat more likely to be characterized by syncratic decision making. However, none of these effects was significant.

The Influence of Premarital Cohabitation  
Upon Subsequent Marital Quality

The most significant finding to emerge from this study is the negative relationship between premarital cohabitation and dyadic adjustment, for both husbands and wives. This is in contrast to previous studies which have found cohabitation to have no effect upon measures of marital success (Bentler and Newcomb, 1978; Jacques and Chason, 1979). In the present study, cohabiting husbands and wives scored, on average, 5.3 points and 6.8 points lower, respectively, on the dyadic adjustment scale than did their noncohabiting counterparts.

A certain portion of this negative effect (21 percent for husbands and 32 percent for wives) is accounted for by controlling for sociodemographic and attitudinal characteristics on which cohabitators and noncohabitators differ. Thus, some of this negative effect is spurious, due to the fact that religious people with traditional sex-role attitudes are both less likely to cohabit premaritally and more likely to express high dyadic adjustment. This phenomenon may be attributable to the greater propensity of religious, traditional people to give socially desirable responses regarding their marriages. Edmonds and his associates have shown that, controlling for marital conventionalization, or the tendency to distort appraisal of the marriage in the direction of social desirability, the positive correlation between traditional family morality and church attendance on

the one hand, and dyadic adjustment, on the other, is strongly reduced (Edmonds et al., 1972: 100).

Even after controlling for other variables, however, having cohabited premaritally still has a negative effect on dyadic adjustment: an average decrement of 4.20 points for husbands and 4.61 points for wives on the dyadic adjustment scale. The possibility that this is simply an artifact of the greater period of time during which cohabitators have been intimately involved was explored by examining the effect of the duration of cohabitation upon dyadic adjustment, for cohabitators. No correlation was found between the number of months that individuals cohabited with their spouses before marriage and their current dyadic adjustment. In light of this, it appears reasonable to rule out the hypothesis that the experience of cohabitation, in itself, is detrimental to marital satisfaction. If this were the case, one would expect to see a negative relationship between satisfaction and the length of time that a couple lived together.

It seems much more reasonable to suppose that some sociodemographic, attitudinal, or personality characteristic of cohabitators renders them more susceptible to dissatisfaction in marriage, compared to their noncohabiting counterparts. For example, cohabitators were found to be significantly less committed to marriage as a permanent arrangement than were noncohabitators, although controlling for this variable did not explain the lower satisfaction of cohabitators. It remains for future research to examine other possible differentiating characteristics.



On the other hand, excessive emphasis should not be placed on the magnitude of the differences in dyadic adjustment between cohabitators and noncohabitators. In practical terms, the differences are fairly small, amounting to, at most, only about four-and-a-half points on a 151-point scale. The more important implication of these results is that they are contrary to what popular lore, as well as professional judgment, would predict. Other sociologists (for example, Mackin, 1972; Ridley et al., 1978) have indicated that cohabitation can serve as an effective "training period" for marriage. Thus, one would expect cohabitation to act as a screening device, eliminating as potential marriage partners those couples who exhibited poor premarital adjustment. The current study suggests that cohabitation serves no such function. Thus, as Newcomb (1979) has pointed out, cohabitation, while becoming more and more popular as a stage in courtship, is not very likely, in the long run, to result in improved mate selection.

#### Other Factors That Influence Marital Interaction and Marital Quality

Previous research has found homogamy, particularly with respect to age, education, and religious activity, to be an important correlate of marital satisfaction (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Chadwick et al., 1976; Osmond and Martin, 1978; Albrecht, 1979). Here, no effects were found for educational homogamy, but both age and religious activity heterogamy were significantly related to communication and dyadic adjustment. Husband-wife similarity with respect to frequency

of church attendance exhibits a curvilinear relationship with communication and dyadic adjustment. For both husbands and wives, the quality of communication in the marriage and dyadic adjustment are significantly lower when there is only a slight difference in attendance, compared to when both spouses attend church with the same frequency. When there is a large discrepancy in attendance, no such effect is seen. The potential for conflict between husband and wife in the area of religious participation is apparently greater when they diverge only a slight amount. This conflict then affects their perception of communication and adjustment in the marriage.

In a similar fashion, age homogamy exhibits a curvilinear relationship with dyadic adjustment for both husbands and wives. Both are significantly more satisfied with their marriages when the husband is between 5 and 8 years older than his wife. This conforms, in many respects, to our society's prescription concerning what is an ideal age difference between husband wife, and may, in fact, represent the optimum degree of age heterogamy for marriage.

For husbands, having traditional sex-role attitudes is negatively related to both communication quality and having a syncratic form of decision making. The more traditional husbands are very likely to subscribe to a stereotype which portrays the "masculine" male as one who "takes charge" in the household and who keeps feelings to himself. Interestingly, controlling for sex-role attitudes, more-educated

husbands are less likely to be syncratic in their decision making. Also, husbands with children are less likely to be syncratic.

In accord with others (Renne, 1970; Rollins and Feldman, 1970; Glenn and Weaver, 1978; Houseknecht, 1979) this study found the presence of children to be associated with lower dyadic adjustment, but only for wives. No significant effect was found for husbands. Finally, high-quality communication and syncratic decision making were found to be associated with higher dyadic adjustment for both husbands and wives, as other researchers have demonstrated (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Burke et al., 1976; Osmond and Martin, 1978).

#### Directions For Future Cohabitation Research

Future research on the subject of unmarried cohabitation should focus on attempting to explain why cohabitators express lower satisfaction after marriage than do noncohabitators. It would also be of interest to examine whether or not this effect persists over time in the marriage. Such research would need to more fully explore the motivations given by men and women for cohabiting or not cohabiting before marriage. In addition, it would be important to examine differences between cohabitators and noncohabitators on a range of social-psychological variables, such as the need for personal autonomy, which might account for differences in satisfaction with marriage.

It would also be of interest to consider the relationship between marital satisfaction and different types of

cohabitation, categorized according to motivation for living together, degree of financial and emotional interdependence during cohabitation, and so forth. It could be that, when cohabitators are differentiated in this manner, certain modes of cohabitation will have more significant consequences for marital success than others.

Certainly, as the data from this study indicate, cohabitation for at least some period of time before marriage is becoming the rule rather than the exception. It remains for sociologists and other scientists of the family to attempt to specify what consequences this practice will have for the success of marriages in the future.

APPENDIX A  
STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Florida

HUSBANDS AND WIVES:

Department

A Study

of

of American

Sociology

Marriages

This questionnaire is part of a major study of recently-married couples. We expect the study to provide important and practical information about marriages in 1980, and how couples feel about their own relationships.

Your answers will be completely anonymous. The identification number on this page is for mailing purposes only. Questions are designed so that you cannot be identified by your responses. Your name will never be associated with this questionnaire.

Although the questionnaire appears bulky, it should only take about 30 minutes to complete.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You and your spouse have been selected to participate in this study on the basis of marriage records which are anywhere from one to two years old. If you are presently separated or divorced, please indicate this in Item number 1 on the first page of the questionnaire and complete it anyway. We would appreciate it if you would then return your completed questionnaire along with the other empty questionnaire to us in the pre-paid envelope.
2. We are interested in each individual's own particular feelings about his or her relationship. Therefore, it is extremely important that husbands and wives not influence each other in any way when answering these questions. PLEASE DO NOT DISCUSS YOUR ANSWERS TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUR SPOUSE UNTIL AFTER BOTH FORMS HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO US.
3. Some of the questions contained on this form will appear to be somewhat personal. We hope that you will be able to answer them all. You may skip any questions of this nature if you wish to do so. However, bear in mind that your answers to all questions will remain anonymous.

Return Questionnaires to:  
Department of Sociology  
3219 GPA  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32601  
Re: Couples Study

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Your current marital status (Circle the appropriate letter):

- A. MARRIED  
B. SEPARATED  
C. DIVORCED

## 2. Below is a list of items on communication between you and your spouse. In the columns on the right are five possible answers. Please indicate how often each item occurs in your relationship (Circle the appropriate answer.)

a. How often do you and your spouse talk over pleasant things that happen during the day?...	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
b. Do you and your spouse talk about things in which you are both interested?.....	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
c. Does your spouse adjust what he (she) says and how he (she) says it to the way you seem to feel at the moment?.....	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
d. Do you and your spouse avoid certain subjects in conversation?.....	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
e. Can your spouse tell what kind of day you have had without asking?.....	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
f. Do you and your spouse use words which have a special meaning not understood by outsiders?...	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
g. How often does your spouse sulk or pout?.....	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
h. Can you and your spouse discuss your most sacred beliefs without feelings of restraint or embarrassment?.....	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
i. You and your spouse are visiting friends. Something is said by the friends which causes you to glance at each other. Would you understand each other?.....	VERY FRE- QUENTLY	FRE- QUENT- LY	OCCA- SIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER

- j. How often do you and your spouse talk with each other about personal problems?.....
- |                  |             |               |        |       |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| VERY FRE-QUENTLY | FRE-QUENTLY | OCCA-SIONALLY | SELDOM | NEVER |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------|-------|
- k. Do you feel that in most matters your spouse knows what you are trying to say?.....
- |                  |             |               |        |       |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| VERY FRE-QUENTLY | FRE-QUENTLY | OCCA-SIONALLY | SELDOM | NEVER |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------|-------|
- l. During marriage, have you and your spouse, in general, talked most things over together?....
- |                  |             |               |        |       |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| VERY FRE-QUENTLY | FRE-QUENTLY | OCCA-SIONALLY | SELDOM | NEVER |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------|-------|
3. Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list (Circle the appropriate answer).
- |   |              |                     |                        |                      |                        |                 |
|---|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| a. Handling family finances.....                    | ALWAYS AGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE | OCCA-SIONALLY DISAGREE | FRE-QUENTLY DISAGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE | ALWAYS DISAGREE |
| b. Matters of recreation.....                       | ALWAYS AGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE | OCCA-SIONALLY DISAGREE | FRE-QUENTLY DISAGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE | ALWAYS DISAGREE |
| c. Religious matters.....                           | ALWAYS AGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE | OCCA-SIONALLY DISAGREE | FRE-QUENTLY DISAGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE | ALWAYS DISAGREE |
| d. Demonstrations of affection.....                 | ALWAYS AGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE | OCCA-SIONALLY DISAGREE | FRE-QUENTLY DISAGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE | ALWAYS DISAGREE |
| e. Friends.....                                     | ALWAYS AGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE | OCCA-SIONALLY DISAGREE | FRE-QUENTLY DISAGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE | ALWAYS DISAGREE |
| f. Sex relations....                                | ALWAYS AGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE | OCCA-SIONALLY DISAGREE | FRE-QUENTLY DISAGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE | ALWAYS DISAGREE |
| g. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior).... | ALWAYS AGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE | OCCA-SIONALLY DISAGREE | FRE-QUENTLY DISAGREE | ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE | ALWAYS DISAGREE |

h. Philosophy of life.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE
i. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE
j. Aims, goals, and things believed important.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE
k. Amount of time spent together.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE
l. Making major decisions.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE
m. Household tasks.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE
n. Leisure time interests and activities.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE
o. Career decisions.....	ALWAYS	ALMOST	OCCA-	FRE-	ALMOST	ALWAYS
	AGREE	AGREE	SIONALLY	QUENTLY	DISAGREE	DISA-GREE

Now, we would like to know how often any of the following occur in your relationship (Circle the appropriate answer).

a. How often do you discuss or have you considered terminating your relationship?.....	ALL	MOST	MORE	OCCA-	RARELY	NEVER
	THE	OF THE	OFTEN			
	TIME	TIME	THAN NOT	SIONALLY		
b. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?.....	ALL	MOST	MORE	OCCA-	RARELY	NEVER
	THE	OF THE	OFTEN			
	TIME	TIME	THAN NOT	SIONALLY		



- 
- c. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?.....
- |              |                  |                     |              |        |       |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ALL THE TIME | MOST OF THE TIME | MORE OFTEN THAN NOT | OCCASIONALLY | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
- d. Do you confide in your mate?.....
- |              |                  |                     |              |        |       |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ALL THE TIME | MOST OF THE TIME | MORE OFTEN THAN NOT | OCCASIONALLY | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
- e. Do you ever regret that you married?.....
- |              |                  |                     |              |        |       |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ALL THE TIME | MOST OF THE TIME | MORE OFTEN THAN NOT | OCCASIONALLY | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
- f. How often do you and your partner quarrel?....
- |              |                  |                     |              |        |       |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ALL THE TIME | MOST OF THE TIME | MORE OFTEN THAN NOT | OCCASIONALLY | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
- g. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?....
- |              |                  |                     |              |        |       |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ALL THE TIME | MOST OF THE TIME | MORE OFTEN THAN NOT | OCCASIONALLY | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
- h. Do you kiss your mate?.....
- |              |                  |                     |              |        |       |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ALL THE TIME | MOST OF THE TIME | MORE OFTEN THAN NOT | OCCASIONALLY | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
- i. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?.....
- |              |                  |                     |              |        |       |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ALL THE TIME | MOST OF THE TIME | MORE OFTEN THAN NOT | OCCASIONALLY | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|-------|

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate? (Circle the appropriate answer).

- 
- a. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas.....
- |       |                   |              |                       |                      |            |            |
|-------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|
| NEVER | LESS THAN A MONTH | ONCE A MONTH | ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH | ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK | ONCE A DAY | MORE OFTEN |
|-------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|
- b. Laugh together.....
- |       |                   |              |                       |                      |            |            |
|-------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|
| NEVER | LESS THAN A MONTH | ONCE A MONTH | ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH | ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK | ONCE A DAY | MORE OFTEN |
|-------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|

c. Calmly discuss something.....NEVER	LESS	ONCE OR	ONCE OR	ONCE	MORE
	THAN ONCE	TWICE A	TWICE A	A	
	A MONTH	MONTH	WEEK	DAY	OFTEN
d. Work together on a project.....NEVER	LESS	ONCE OR	ONCE OR	ONCE	MORE
	THAN ONCE	TWICE A	TWICE A	A	
	A MONTH	MONTH	WEEK	DAY	OFTEN

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks (Circle Yes or No).

- a. Being too tired for sex.....YES NO
- b. Not showing love.....YES NO

The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

.	.	.	.	.	.	.
EX- TREMELY UNHAPPY	FAIRLY UNHAPPY	A LITTLE UNHAPPY	HAPPY	VERY HAPPY	EX- TREMELY HAPPY	PERFECT

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? (Circle the appropriate letter).

- A. I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- B. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
- C. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- D. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- E. It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- F. My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement (Circle the appropriate letter):

No matter how much trouble a husband and wife are having getting along, the best thing to do is to stay married and try to work out their problems.

- A. STRONGLY AGREE
- B. AGREE
- C. UNDECIDED
- D. DISAGREE
- E. STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. In every family decisions must be made regarding such things as where the family will live, and so on. Consider the following list of decision areas, and for each one indicate how the final decision is arrived at in your marriage (Circle the appropriate answer. An answer guide is given below).

HUSBAND COMPLETELY means Husband decides without talking to wife

HUSBAND MOSTLY means Husband decides after talking to wife

BOTH EQUALLY means Husband and wife decide together

WIFE MOSTLY means Wife decides after talking to husband

WIFE COMPLETELY means Wife decides without talking to husband

a. What people you will invite to the house or go out with.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
b. How to decorate or furnish the house.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
c. Which TV or radio program to tune in.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
d. What the family will have for dinner.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY

e. What type of clothes the husband will buy.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
f. What type of clothes the wife will buy.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
g. What car to get....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
h. Whether or not to buy life insurance.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
i. What house or a- partment to take....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
j. What job the hus- band should take....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
k. Whether or not the wife should go to work or quit work.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
l. How much money the family can afford to spend per week on food.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
m. What doctor to have when some- one is sick.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY
n. Where to go on vacation.....	HUSBAND COMPLE- TELY	HUSBAND MOSTLY	BOTH EQUALLY	WIFE MOSTLY	WIFE COMPLE- TELY

These days many couples live together for a while before getting married. By "living together" we mean to have shared a room or residence for at least 4 nights per week for at least 3 consecutive months with your current spouse prior to marriage. According to this definition, did you and your current spouse live together before getting married? (CIRCLE EITHER "A", "B", or "C"; then go on to the appropriate section)

If answer  
is "A" go  
on to ques-  
tion #14  
Below

- A. My spouse and I did not live together at any time before getting married.
- B. My spouse and I lived together before getting married, but not long enough or often enough to qualify for this definition.
- C. My spouse and I lived together before getting married, according to this definition.

If Answer is "B" or "C" go on to question #5 Below

5. For about how long did you live together before you got married?

\_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS

6. During this time, did you stay together in the same residence all the time, or only for a certain number of days per week?

- A. ALL THE TIME
- B. 4-6 DAYS PER WEEK
- C. 3 DAYS PER WEEK OR LESS

7. Did anyone else live with you and your spouse-to-be at this time?

- A. NO
- B. YES (Please specify. For example, minor children, male friend, female friend, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Did either you or your spouse-to-be maintain an additional residence at this time?

- A. NO
- B. YES

9. Did you and your spouse-to-be own any of the following in common while you were living together? (Circle as many as apply).

- |                                   |                              |  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| A. HOUSE                          | H. AUTOMOBILE<br>OR TRUCK    | M. WORKS OF ART  |
| B. CONDOMINIUM                    | I. MOTORCYCLE                | N. SMALL BUSINESS<br>(Please specify. For<br>example: service<br>station, clothing<br>store, etc.) |
| C. MOBILE HOME                    | J. FURNITURE                 | _____  |
| D. CAMPER OR RECREATIONAL VEHICLE | K. TV OR STEREO<br>EQUIPMENT | _____  |
| E. BOAT                           | L. MUSICAL<br>INSTRUMENTS    | _____  |
| F. LAND                           |                              |  |
| G. VACATION HOME                  |                              | O. OTHER (Please specify)<br>_____   |

10. Did you and your spouse-to-be have a joint checking or savings account while you were living together?

- A. NO  
B. YES

11. Did either of you have the other person listed as a beneficiary of a will or insurance policy when you were living together?

- A. NO  
B. YES

12. Did you and your spouse-to-be go on vacations together while you were living together?

- A. NO  
B. YES

13. How happy a couple were you when you were living together unmarried?  
(The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Circle the appropriate dot).

EX- TREMELY UNHAPPY	FAIRLY UNHAPPY	A LITTLE UNHAPPY	HAPPY	VERY HAPPY	EX- TREMELY HAPPY	PERFECT
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All Persons Answer This
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Next, we would like to know how you feel about some things in general.

14. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (Circle the appropriate answer):

- |  |                      |          |               |       |                   |
|--|----------------------|----------|---------------|-------|-------------------|
| a. Whoever is the better wage-earner, wife or husband, should be the breadwinner.....  | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| b. Men are more capable of assuming leadership than women.....   | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| c. Men's clubs and lodges should be required to admit women.....   | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| d. A husband who is the breadwinner in the family should make all the important decisions.....                                 | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| e. I would feel uncomfortable if my immediate supervisor at work was a woman..   | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| f. Women generally prefer light conversation over rational discussions.....  | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| g. It is possible for women to satisfy their needs for achievement through their husbands.....                                 | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| h. Females should go ahead and pamper males--"tell him how great he is" because that's a useful way to get what they want..... | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |
| i. The way men and women behave is more a result of their genetic make-up than of the way they were brought up.....            | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | NO<br>OPINION | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |

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j. Women with children in grammar school should if at all possible stay at home, rather than work.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
k. To a great extent, women are less able to make a career commitment than men are.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
l. Women can attain true equality in this country only through a really drastic change in the social structure.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
m. Men should stop appraising women solely on the basis of appearance and sex appeal.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
n. Either consciously or unconsciously most women would like to be men.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
o. Men should have more freedom to do such things as cook and care for children, if they so desire....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
p. A man's self-esteem is severely injured if his wife makes more money than he does.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
q. Women should have equal job opportunities with men.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
r. Women should get equal pay with men for doing the same jobs.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
s. Men need liberation equally as much as women do.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
t. Career women generally are neurotic.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE



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u. There is considerable evidence that men, in general, are a "superior species" to women.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
v. Females should be encouraged to plan for a career, not just a job.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
w. Men should take the same amount of responsibility as women in caring for home and children.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
x. Since as with animals, men have a natural urge to dominate and lead, women who challenge this actually threaten the welfare of society.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
y. I would vote for a woman for President of the United States.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
z. Women are less capable of making important decisions than men are.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
aa. The equal rights amendment related to sex should be ratified as quickly as possible.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
bb. There should be low-cost, high-quality child care centers for working women.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
cc. Women really like being dependent on men.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
dd. Women with pre-school children should not work-- if at all possible.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
ee. Women are as capable as men of enjoying a full sex life.....	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about yourself to help interpret the results.

MALE

FEMALE

16. Your age (at last birthday) \_\_\_\_\_

17. What is the highest grade that you have completed in school? (Circle the appropriate number) 2 yrs

no  
formal  
educ.

high  
school  
diploma

2 yrs  
coll. or  
junior  
coll.  
degree

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----

16 Completed college (Specify Major) \_\_\_\_\_

17 Some graduate work

18 A graduate degree (Specify Degree and Major) \_\_\_\_\_

SELF-EMPLOYED  
OR

[illegible]

18. What is  
Your  
Occupation?

19. What is (or was,  
if now retired)  
your Father's  
major job or  
Occupation in  
life?

20. What is (or was,  
if now retired)  
your Mother's  
major job or  
Occupation in  
life?

## 21. Your Religious Preference

- A. NONE  
B. CATHOLIC  
C. PROTESTANT  
D. JEWISH  
E. OTHER (Please Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## 22. How often did you attend religious services during the past year?

- A. NOT AT ALL  
B. A FEW TIMES  
C. ABOUT ONCE A MONTH  
D. ABOUT TWO TO THREE TIMES A MONTH  
E. ABOUT ONCE A WEEK  
F. MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

## 23. Were you ever married before?

NO YES

If "Yes", how did your last marriage end?

- A. DIVORCE  
B. ANNULMENT  
C. DEATH OF SPOUSE

## 24. Do you and your spouse currently have any minor children living with you?

NO YES

If "Yes", how many? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your marriage in particular, or about marriage in general? If so, please use this space for that purpose.

Also, any comments you wish to make that you think may help us in this or in future studies of family life will be appreciated, either here or in a separate letter.

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Your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated. If you would like a summary of results, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope (NOT on this questionnaire). We will see that you get it.

APPENDIX B  
INITIAL COVER LETTER

October 1, 1980

Many of the nation's leaders, counselors, teachers, and ordinary citizens are concerned about the future of the American family. Young people often question family professionals about such things as: how successful are modern marriages? Why is there such a high divorce rate? What determines whether or not you will have a happy marriage? While there is a great deal of speculation on these issues, there is very little factual information available on them--information based on the opinions of married people themselves.

As family sociologists, we are involved in a major study of recently-married couples. We are interested in how couples get along in their everyday lives and how they feel about their own marriages.

You and your spouse are one of approximately 400 married couples who have been randomly selected for inclusion in the study. We are asking you and your spouse to participate by each completing one of the enclosed questionnaires and returning them in the pre-paid envelope. In order for our information to be truly representative of American marriages, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned. In a way, you will be "speaking" for countless thousands of married men and women in this country.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Each questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so that we may check your names off the mailing list when your questionnaires are returned. Your names will never be placed on the questionnaires.

The results of this research will be used to further scientific knowledge about human relationships, and also will be disseminated to family professionals so that they can provide useful information to other couples who are themselves contemplating marriage. You may receive a summary of results by writing "copy of results requested" on

the back of the return envelope, and printing your name and address below it. Please do not put this information on the questionnaire itself.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write me at the Sociology Department or call me at home. The number is 378-9959. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Al DeMaris, M.A.

APPENDIX C  
FIRST FOLLOW-UP CONTACT

October 8, 1980

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinion about various aspects of marriage was mailed to each of you. You and your spouse were randomly selected from Florida marriage records for inclusion in the study.

If you have already completed and returned them to us please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because these questionnaires have been sent to only a small, but representative, sample of married couples it is extremely important that yours also be included in the study if the results are to accurately portray contemporary marriages in America.

If by some chance, you did not receive the questionnaires, or they got misplaced, please call me right now, collect (904-378-9959) and I will get two others in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Al DeMaris, M.A.  
Project Director

APPENDIX D  
SECOND FOLLOW-UP CONTACT

October 22, 1980

About three weeks ago we wrote to you seeking your opinions about various aspects of marriage. As of today we have not yet received your completed questionnaires.

Our research unit has undertaken this study because we believe that information gained from husbands and wives about their own relationships will provide extremely valuable data on the kinds of forces that affect the long-term success of marriages.

We are writing to you again because of the significance that each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this study. Your names were drawn through a scientific sampling process which utilizes marriage licenses filed in the state of Florida. Out of the thousands of couples who marry in this country every year, only about 400 couples are being asked to complete these questionnaires. In order for the results of this study to be truly representative of marriages today, it is essential that each person in the sample return his or her questionnaire.

In the event that your questionnaires have been misplaced, two more have been enclosed. If you have any questions about this study, please call me at home, collect. The number is (904) 378-9959.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Al DeMaris, M.A.  
Project Director



APPENDIX E  
THIRD FOLLOW-UP CONTACT

November 10, 1980

About two weeks ago a second set of questionnaires was mailed to you requesting your opinions on various aspects of marriage. As of this date we have not yet received your completed questionnaires.

Our persistence in this effort is due to the importance that each questionnaire has to the scientific accuracy of our findings. Our past experiences suggest that those of you who have not yet responded may feel very differently about things from those who already have.

In the event that only one of you has the time to answer a questionnaire, we would be most happy to receive one from either the husband or the wife. Once again, if you have misplaced your questionnaires or if you have any questions about the study, please call me collect at (904) 378-9959.

Most Sincerely,

Al DeMaris, M.A.  
Project Director

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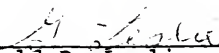
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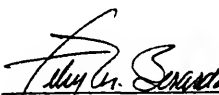
#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Alfred DeMaris was born in Miami Beach, Florida, on January 29, 1946. He is of Italian-American descent. He received a B.A. in English from the University of Miami in June of 1968. After graduation from college he taught English in secondary school in Jacksonville, Florida. From 1969 to 1973 he served on active duty in the United States Coast Guard, spending three of the four years as radioman, navigator and crewman aboard long-range rescue helicopters. Upon leaving the Coast Guard, he returned to school, entering graduate school in sociology at the University of Florida in January of 1975, and receiving his master's degree in June of 1977. While at the University of Florida, Alfred worked as a research and teaching assistant, both in the Department of Sociology and in the Department of Ophthalmology. Alfred is currently a Visiting Instructor in the Department of Sociology at Auburn University.


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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Gerald R. Leslie, Chairman  
Professor of Sociology


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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Felix M. Berardo  
Professor of Sociology


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Professor of Psychology

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John C. Henretta  
Associate Professor of Sociology

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